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NASDAQ 5,000

Index Passes Post Dot-Com Milestone Number

Electronic screens reflect the value of the Nasdaq Composite at the Nasdaq MarketSite, Monday, March 2, 2015 in New York. After fifteen long years, the Nasdaq is close to topping its record from the dot-com frenzy.

(AP Photo/Mark Lennihan)
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U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry during a news conference in Geneva, March 2, 2015.

(Evan Vucci/Pool via The New York Times)

Kerry defends Israel before UN human rights panel in Geneva

MICHAEL R. GORDON
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GENEVA - Secretary of State John Kerry came to the defense of Israel before a U.N. human rights body Monday, saying that the "unbalanced focus" on Israel was undermining the organization's credibility.

"It must be said that the HRC's obsession with Israel risks undermining the credibility of the entire organization," Kerry said, using an abbreviation for the Human Rights Council.

The Obama administration has sought in recent days to portray itself as a staunch supporter of Israel's security, even as it has differed sharply with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the merits of the potential deal that would limit Iran's nuclear program.

Susan E. Rice, President Barack Obama's national security adviser, is expected to deliver that message in her appearance Monday at a conference organized by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Kerry sought to bolster that position in his address, emphasizing that the United States "will oppose any effort by any group or participant in the U.N. system to arbitrarily and regularly delegitimize or isolate Israel."

U.S. officials are particularly concerned that a U.N. inquiry into the 2014 conflict in Gaza may be biased and could be used by critics to try to isolate Israel, politically or economically. "Our hope is that the coun-

cil will continue to shift its focus away from Israel and really focus on the bad human rights violators throughout the world," a senior State Department official told reporters Sunday, referring to nations like Syria and North Korea, which Kerry has singled out for its "appalling" human rights record.

For all his support of Israel, however, Kerry warned in a news conference after his speech against selective leaks of the nuclear talks, saying that could complicate unfinished negotiations. Kerry did not say specifically who he feared might reveal the details, but it seemed clear that he was referring to Netanyahu and his aides.

After providing his defense of Israel, Kerry left for Montreux, Switzerland, and a negotiating session with Mohammad Javad Zarif, the Iranian foreign minister. Iran has yet to respond to questions posed by the International Atomic Energy Agency about suspected work on nuclear weapon designs, Kerry said, or accept all of the verification measures that would be needed to strictly monitor the accord.

"Iran needs to answer those questions, and Iran needs to give confidence to the world," Kerry said. Making a point that the Iranian leadership has emphasized in recent weeks, Zarif said Tehran was insisting that economic sanctions be lifted quickly if an accord is reached. □

Netanyahu assails Iran deal, touts US-Israel ties at AIPAC conference

JULIE PACE
ARON HELLER
Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — Ben-

jamin Netanyahu and U.S. officials cast their dispute over Iran as a family squabble on Monday, but the Israeli leader still claimed that President Barack Obama did not — and could not — understand his nation's vital security concerns.

"American leaders worry about the security of their country," Netanyahu said as he opened a controversial trip to Washington. "Israeli leaders worry about the survival of their country."

Netanyahu's remarks to a friendly crowd at a pro-

clear that he would not hold back in criticizing the U.S.-led nuclear negotiations with Iran.

"I have a moral obligation to speak up in the face of these dangers while there is still time to avert them," he told the cheering crowd of 16,000 at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference. He said Israel had a unique understanding of the security concerns posed by any Iranian pursuit of a nuclear bomb because of its position in a "dangerous neighborhood."

As Netanyahu spoke, Secretary of State John Kerry was in Switzerland opening another round of talks with Iran, as the parties try to

near, his criticism has become more forceful.

U.S. officials have reported progress toward a prospective agreement that would freeze Iran's nuclear program for at least 10 years but allow the Iranians to slowly ramp up in later years. Netanyahu has said that framework suggests the U.S. and its partners have "given up" on stopping Iran from getting a bomb.

In response, Kerry has said America's major historic support of Israel suggests Washington deserves the benefit of the doubt. While Obama and Netanyahu have never gotten along personally, the rift over Iran has sunk their re-



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel addresses the American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference in Washington, March 2, 2015.

(Doug Mills/The New York Times)

Israel lobby's annual conference amounted to a warm-up act for his address to Congress Tuesday, an appearance orchestrated by Obama's political opponents and aimed squarely at undermining the White House's high-stakes bid for a nuclear deal with Iran. Netanyahu tried to paper over his personal differences with Obama, insisting he was not in Washington to "disrespect" the president and saying that any reports of the demise of U.S.-Israel ties were "not only premature, they're just wrong." Still, Netanyahu made

cobble together a framework agreement before an end-of-March deadline. Obama views the prospect of a nuclear accord with Iran as a central component of his foreign policy legacy — as much as Netanyahu views blocking such a deal as a component of his own.

Netanyahu has been wary of Obama's diplomatic pursuits with Iran from the start, fearing the U.S. will leave Tehran on the cusp of being able to build a bomb. As the outlines of a deal have emerged and the deadline has drawn

relationship to a new low. The White House has criticized the prime minister's address to Congress as a breach of diplomatic protocol and, officials have publicly questioned his judgment on the merits of the Iran deal.

Obama has no plan to meet with Netanyahu this week, citing Israel's March 17 elections and longstanding U.S. policy to avoid appearing to play favorites in foreign voting.

Netanyahu's remarks at AIPAC were bracketed by speeches from a pair of senior U.S. officials: Samantha Power and Susan Rice. □



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Obama: 'Now is the moment' for US police to make changes



President Barack Obama speaks during a meeting with members of the Task Force on 21st Century Policing, Monday, March 2, 2015, in the Roosevelt Room of the White House in Washington. From left are, the president, Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey, and Brittany Packnett, executive director of Teach For America in St. Louis, Missouri.

(AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

NEDRA PICKLER

ERIC TUCKER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S.

President Barack Obama said Monday that the deaths of unarmed black men in Missouri and New York show that law enforcement needs to change practices to build trust in minority communities, with a White House task force

recommending independent outside investigations when police use deadly force.

The president said the deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and Eric Garner in New York City exposed "deep rooted frustration in many communities of color around the need for fair and just law enforcement." He said a

policing task force he appointed found it's important for police and the communities they cover to improve cooperation.

"The moment is now for us to make these changes," Obama said from the White House during a meeting with members of the task force, who worked for three months to develop the recommendations.

"We have a great opportunity coming out of some great conflict and tragedy to really transform how we think about community law enforcement relations so that everybody feels safer and our law enforcement officers feel — rather than being embattled — feel fully supported. We need to seize that opportunity."

Obama said the task force found great interest in developing best practices for police training to reduce bias and help officers deal with stressful situations. He recognized a particularly controversial recommendation would be the need for independent investigations

in fatal police shootings.

"The importance of making sure that there's a sense of accountability when in fact law enforcement is involved in a deadly shooting is something that I think communities across the board are going to be considering," Obama said.

The task force echoed calls from officials including Attorney General Eric Holder

and FBI Director James Comey for more complete record-keeping about the numbers of police-involved shootings across the U.S. Such data is currently reported by local law enforcement on a voluntary basis, and there is no central or reliable repository for those statistics. "There's no reason for us not to have this data available," said Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey, a co-chair, who said he was surprised to learn that there were no reliable records kept. "Now that we know that this does not exist, it is our responsibility to do everything we can to develop that information." The task force held seven public hearings that included testimony from more than 100 people. The panel also met with leaders of groups advocating for the rights of blacks, Hispanics, Asians, veterans, gays, the disabled and others.

Laurie Robinson, a professor at George Mason University and co-chair of the task force, told reporters the type of community-police relations envisioned by the report does not happen quickly.

"It takes time, it takes relationship-building and it doesn't happen overnight," she said. □

Cleveland leaders apologize over blaming boy for own death

CLEVELAND (AP) — Cleveland's mayor apologized on Monday after the city's lawyers suggested in court documents that a 12-year-old boy who had a pellet gun when he was shot by police died as a result of his own actions.

Mayor Frank Jackson said the city's response to a federal lawsuit filed on behalf of Tamir Rice's family was

poorly worded and offensive. "We used words and we phrased things in such a way that was very insensitive," the mayor said.

The court documents filed late last week by the city said Tamir's injuries and the subsequent complaints for damages stemmed from his actions and failure "to exercise due care to avoid injury." It similarly said the

"injuries, losses and damages" cited for his relatives in the complaint "were directly and proximately caused by their own acts," not by the city.

Jackson said that he's talked with representatives of Tamir's family, and that the city plans to alter the wording in the documents within the next three weeks.

The city said in response

to the federal lawsuit that it didn't violate Tamir's federal rights and that it is entitled to certain legal immunities. Tamir was shot in the abdomen by an officer responding to a call about someone with a firearm near a recreation center on Nov. 22. The officer fired within two seconds of the police car stopping nearby, and the confronta-

tion was captured on surveillance video. Tamir had been carrying what turned out to be an airsoft-type gun that shoots non-lethal plastic pellets.

The Cuyahoga County sheriff's department is investigating the shooting. A prosecutor has promised that a grand jury will consider whether the case merits criminal charges. □

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Los Angeles police kill man in struggle captured on video

TAMI A BDOLLAH

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Police fatally shot a homeless man during a "brutal" videotaped struggle in which a rookie officer cried out that the man had hold of his gun before three other officers opened fire, the Los Angeles police chief said Monday.

Chief Charlie Beck's account of the incident, including photos showing the condition of the gun, was rare 24 hours after a shooting involving an officer. It comes amid heightened attention to killings by police that have led to protests, some violent, across the United States.

Beck said video showed the man reaching toward the officer's waistband. The officer's gun was found partly cocked and jammed with a bullet in the chamber and another in the ejection port, indicating a struggle for the weapon.

"You can hear the young officer who was primarily engaged in the confrontation saying that 'He has my gun. He has my gun,'" Beck said. "He says it several

times, with conviction."

Earlier Monday, activists called on California Gov. Jerry Brown to appoint a special investigator to

ers.

The shooting is being investigated by the police department's inspector general and the Los Ange-

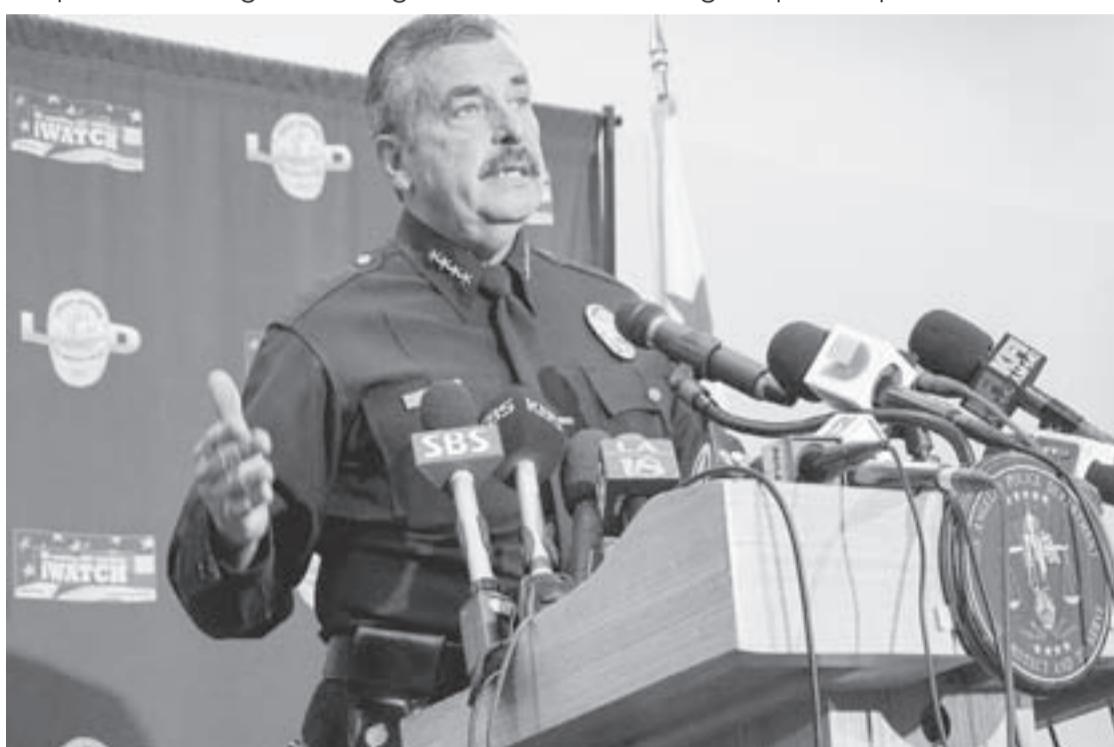
worn by a sergeant and another officer who fired their weapons.

"The video is disturbing," police spokesman Andrew

lice are seen drawing their batons and warning an angry crowd to step back. Several people shouted at the officers, accusing them of going too far.

Sunday's violence had echoes of the August police shooting of 25-year-old Ezell Ford, whose death in a struggle with LA officers brought demonstrations in the city. Ford was unarmed. Police said he was shot after reaching for an officer's gun. Witnesses said the man killed Sunday was known as "Africa," though they withheld his name. Smith said he had previous interactions with officers.

The shadowy video does not clearly the man's race, but witnesses said he was black, as was the officer whose gun was partly cocked. Police were investigating a reported robbery when they tried to talk with the suspect and he refused to obey their commands and started fighting, Beck said. Witnesses said the man had been on Skid Row for months, living amid the tents, sleeping bags and trash that are common in the area.□



Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck comments on the shooting of a homeless man on Skid Row of Los Angeles, at a news conference at police headquarters, Monday, March 2, 2015. Police fatally shot a homeless man on Skid Row during a "brutal" videotaped struggle in which a rookie officer cried out that the man had hold of his gun before three other officers opened fire, the Los Angeles police chief said Monday.

(AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes)

examine the killing in Los Angeles' Skid Row neighborhood, home to a large population of street dwell-

les district attorney. Among the evidence are two videos shot by bystanders and two shot with cameras

Smith said Sunday. "It's disturbing any time anyone loses their life. It's a tragedy." After the shooting, po-



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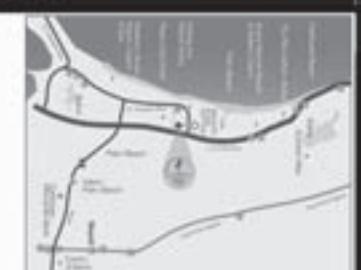
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Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland set to retire



In this June, 2011 photo, Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., speaks to reporters on Capitol Hill in Washington. Mikulski, who became the longest-serving woman in the history of Congress, announced Monday, March 2, 2015, that she will not run for re-election. She was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1976 and has served in the Senate since 1987.

(AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta, File)

JENNIFER STEINHAUER
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WASHINGTON - Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski, the animated and occasionally irascible Democrat from Maryland who rose from being a community organizer to become the longest-serving woman in Congress, announced Monday that she would retire when her term ends in 2017.

The surprising decision came just a few months after Republicans gained control of the Senate, re-

ducing Mikulski from chairwoman to of the powerful Appropriations Committee, where she had been the first woman to lead the panel, to ranking member. Mikulski, 78, announced her decision to not seek a sixth term in Baltimore. Mikulski said she wanted to spend the next two years in Congress focusing on her work instead of raising money and campaigning. "Do I spend my time raising money or do I spend my time raising hell?" she said

at the news conference in the Fells Point neighborhood, the original port area of Baltimore, noting her sometimes combative legislative style that has served her well over decades in a body that has become increasingly partisan and gridlocked.

Her decision comes at a time when Maryland Democrats are struggling to refocus after a shocking loss of its governorship to Republicans last year.

"Every day, I want to wake

up thinking about you, the little guys and gals, the watermen, automobile workers, researchers, small-business owners and families," Mikulski said Monday. "I want to give you 120 percent of my time with all of my energy focused on you and your futures."

Mikulski, a former social worker who climbed through Maryland's political system over the course of several decades, served as a mentor to women of both parties, organizing monthly dinners to talk work and family. She was one of only two women in the Senate when she took office in 1987, and she used that experience to build a base of female power in the Capitol.

"To me, she has been an extraordinary role model, a wonderful mentor, and a close friend," said Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, one of the 20 women serving in the Senate. "I will miss her strong leadership, good humor, intelligence and integrity. Among potential replacements for Mikulski - who handily won re-election the last time she ran - are Reps. Chris Van Hollen, Elijah E. Cummings and Donna Edwards, although the party also could try to press Martin O'Malley, the former Maryland governor who is considering a White House bid in 2016, to run for the seat.

There will no doubt be some pressure on the Democratic state party to find another

woman to run. Maryland does not have an African-American elected to state office, a hope dashed last year when Lt. Gov. Anthony G. Brown was beaten in an upset by Republican Larry Hogan in the race for governor.

But the fact that Mikulski served so long and the absence of a Democrat in the governor's office could make the process a bit of a free for all.

"There is, in some sense, pent up demand among a lot of people," said John T. Willis professor of government and public policy University of Baltimore. "There could be a real domino effect and when you say, 'Who is the ideal demographic of the candidate?' there is no one who can control that. I think it is totally wide open."

At least one Republican - Rep. Andy Harris - is very likely to consider a run.

Mikulski was elected to the House in 1976 and to the Senate a decade later. In 2012, she surpassed Rep. Edith Nourse Rogers, R-Mass., as the longest-serving woman in Congress.

Mikulski was devoted to increasing the number of female Democrats in Congress, and maintaining an informal working group of women from both parties in the Senate, a rarefied group. Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., has said she too will not seek another term when her current one ends in 2016. □



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US Financial Front:

Consumer spending, adjusted for inflation, rose in January

MARTIN CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. consumers spent less for a second consecutive month in January, but the weakness came from a big decline in gas prices. Excluding price changes, consumer spending was up in January and analysts expect strong income gains will fuel further solid increases in spending in the months ahead.

Consumer spending declined 0.2 percent in January following a 0.3 percent drop in December, the Commerce Department reported Monday. But the weakness in both months was heavily influenced by big declines in gas prices. Excluding price changes, consumer spending rose 0.3 percent in January and would have been down a smaller 0.1 percent in December.

Income grew 0.3 percent in January as wages and salaries increased a strong \$42.4 billion and excluding inflation, after-tax incomes shot up 0.9 percent, the best showing in two years. Analysts expect that solid job gains and low unemployment will bolster con-



A shopper pays for produce at a Farmers Market in downtown Los Angeles. Consumer spending declined 0.2 percent in January following a 0.3 percent drop in December, the Commerce Department reported Monday, March 2, 2015.

sumer spending and lift economic growth this year to what they predict will be the fastest pace in a decade.

"Even though households didn't take full advantage of their savings on gasoline in January, they still have a lot of scope to increase real consumption in the first half of the year," said Paul Ashworth, chief U.S. economist at Capital Economics.

The combination of falling spending and rising income translated into an increase in the personal saving rate, which climbed to 5.5 percent of after-tax income, up from 5 percent in December and the highest level since late 2012. Inflation, as measured by a gauge tied to consumer spending, fell 0.5 percent in January, reflecting the big drop in energy prices. Over

or September. The January report is the first look at consumer spending for the first quarter of this year. Economists examine consumer spending closely since it accounts for 70 percent of economic activity. The government last week revised its estimate for overall economic growth as measured by the gross domestic product to a slower pace of 2.2 percent in the October-December quarter, down from an initial estimate of 2.6 percent growth in the fourth quarter.

The downward revision reflected less spending by businesses to restock their inventories and a bigger trade deficit than initially estimated. Consumer spending remained strong during the fourth quarter, rising at an annual rate of 4.2 percent. That was the best showing since early 2006.

Economists expect the overall growth this year will top 3 percent, the best performance in a decade. That optimism is based on a belief that a stronger job market will boost incomes and that will in turn support solid gains in consumer spending. □

US construction spending dips down 1.1% in January

M. CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. construction spending fell in January, reflecting weakness in spending on office buildings and other non-residential projects and in government activity.

Construction spending fell 1.1 percent in January following a revised 0.8 percent increase in December, the

Commerce Department reported Monday.

Spending on home construction rose 0.6 percent but spending on nonresidential projects dropped 1.6 percent, reflecting declines in hotels, office buildings and the category that covers shopping centers. Spending on government projects also declined in January, falling 2.8 percent.

Private economists had predicted a small overall gain in January.

The unusually severe weather in many parts of the country in January could have had an impact activity. Economists expect the weakness will be temporary and are forecasting a rebound in activity once winter storms stop disrupting plans.

In January, spending on single-family homes rose 0.6 percent and spending on apartment buildings rose an even stronger 1.9 percent. The weakness in nonresidential projects was led by a 5.7 percent drop in the category that covers shopping centers.

The 2.8 percent drop in spending on government projects followed a 1.7 per-

cent rise in December. Over the course of 2014, spending on offices, power plants, factories and hotels and motels climbed significantly, a potential sign of broader economic growth in 2015.

The solid gains helped boost job growth in the construction industry, which added nearly 3 million jobs in 2014, the most since 1999. □



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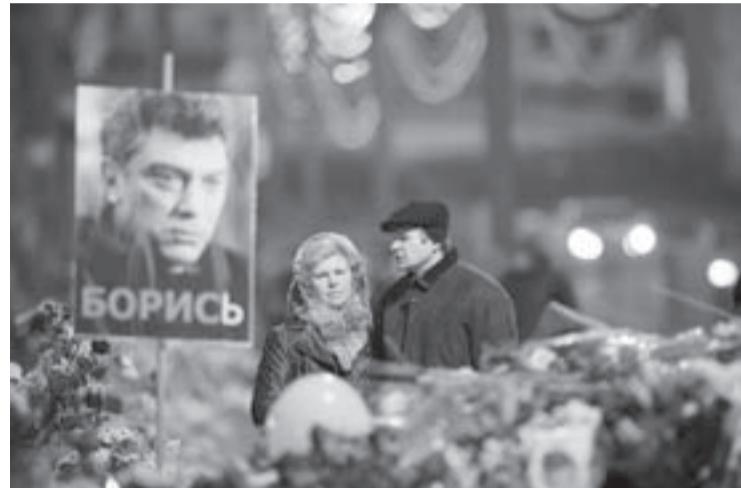


Woman with slain Putin critic says she didn't see his killer

V. ISACHENKOV
Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — The 23-year-old Ukrainian model who was with slain opposition leader Boris Nemtsov tearfully recounted Monday their last dinner in a chic Red Square restaurant and their walk onto a nearby bridge — but said she did not see the gunman who pulled the trigger. The emotional account by Anna Duritskaya came amid a swirl of speculation about who was responsible for the high-profile assassination and what it means for Russia.

While state-run and Kremlin-controlled media focused on a theory that the killing was a provocation aimed at staining President Vladimir Putin, his critics are



A couple comes to pay respects at the place where Boris Nemtsov, a charismatic Russian opposition leader and sharp critic of President Vladimir Putin, was gunned down on Friday, Feb. 27, 2015 near the Kremlin, in Moscow, Russia, Monday, March 2, 2015.

(AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko)

holding the Russian leader responsible for creating an atmosphere that encouraged the crime by fanning nationalist, anti-Western

sentiments and vilifying the opposition.

Duritskaya said she has been questioned extensively by authorities. The

Ukrainian Foreign Ministry said she has flown home to her native Ukraine, the Interfax news agency reported late Monday. In her first public comments since the killing, Duritskaya said in an interview with Russia's independent Dzhed television that she waited for Nemtsov to meet her Friday night at the Bosco Cafe, a pricey restaurant in the former GUM department store on Red Square. He had just given a radio interview in which he had slammed Putin's "mad, aggressive policy" on Ukraine. They dined and then walked across a bridge near St. Basil's Cathedral, heading for Nemtsov's apartment across the Moscow River from the Kremlin, she said, her eyes welling with tears.

Duritskaya said didn't see the man who shot Nemtsov, only a car speeding up.

"I don't know where he

came from, but he was behind," she said of the gunman. "I didn't see the man. I turned round and all I saw was a light-colored car. I saw neither the brand nor the license plate of the car that was driving away."

After Nemtsov was shot, she saw a snowplow approaching them on the bridge and she said she asked its driver how to call police. The driver gave her the number, then drove away, she added. TV Center, a station controlled by the Moscow city government, broadcast a poor-resolution video from a web camera that it said showed Nemtsov and Duritskaya shortly before he was killed. A vehicle that TVC identified as a snowplow moved slowly behind the couple, obscuring the view of the shooting. TV Center then circled what it said was the suspected killer jumping into a passing car. □

Russia and Ukraine reach gas deal to avoid cuts this month

LORNE COOK
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Russia and Ukraine reached an agreement late Monday to ensure natural gas supplies to war-torn Ukraine for the month of March, averting possible cuts that could have hit supplies to the European Union.

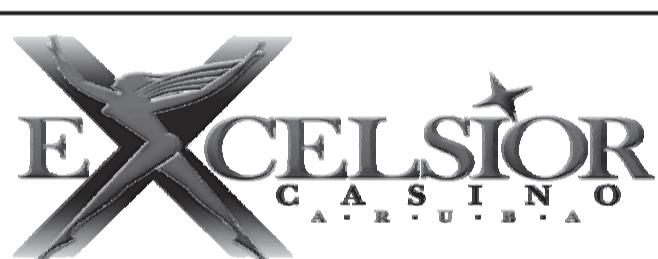
The two countries have fought several gas price wars in past years and Moscow had been threatening to turn off the taps to Ukraine on Tuesday unless it received outstanding pre-payments, as agreed in a deal they clinched last October, the so-called winter package.

"I am satisfied that we managed to safeguard the full application of the

winter package for the supply needs in Ukraine," said EU energy chief Maros Sefcovic after mediating emergency talks between Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak and his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Demchishyn.

Demchishyn said that both parties had agreed "to obey the rules" until the end of March.

Under the deal sealed in Brussels, Ukraine's Naftogaz will pre-pay and order sufficient quantities of gas to ensure all domestic consumption for March and guarantee undisrupted supplies to the EU. Gazprom commits to supply a set quantity of natural gas each day at agreed on delivery points. □



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Iraq launches operation to retake Tikrit from Islamic State



A Danish trainer tells an Iraqi army trainee, 2nd from left, to correct his weapon's position during simulated room clearing exercises, as part of multinational efforts in helping combat the Islamic State militant group in Iraq.

(AP Photo/Master Sgt. Mike Lavigne, U.S. Army)

S. SALAHEDDIN

Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Backed by Iranian-supported Shiite militias, Iraqi forces launched a large-scale offensive Monday to retake Saddam Hussein's hometown from the Islamic State group, the first in a series of campaigns to try to reclaim large parts of northern Iraq from the Sunni extremists.

Previous attempts to capture the symbolic city have failed, and hours into Monday's operation, the military said it still hadn't entered Tikrit, indicating a long battle lies ahead. Retaking it will help Iraqi forces secure a major supply link for any future operation to retake Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city which has been under militant rule since June.

State-run Al-Iraqiya television said that forces were attacking from different directions, backed by artillery and airstrikes by Iraqi fighter jets. It said the militants were dislodged from

some areas outside the city, but several hours into the operation, it gave no additional details.

Tikrit, the provincial capital of Salahuddin province, 80 miles (130 kilometers) north of Baghdad, fell to the Islamic State group last summer, along with Mosul and other areas in the country's Sunni heartland.

U.S. military officials have said a coordinated military mission to retake Mosul will likely begin in April or May and involve up to 25,000 Iraqi troops. But the Americans have cautioned that if the Iraqis aren't ready, the offensive could be delayed.

The U.S.-led coalition launching airstrikes targeting the Islamic State group was not involved in the Tikrit operation, Iraqi officials said. A Pentagon spokesman, Army Col. Steve Warren, said the U.S. was alerted to the offensive before it started Monday but was not asked to provide air power.

"Right now we are not providing any air power to support the Iraqi operation in the city of Tikrit," Warren told reporters in Washington. "We did note the Iraqi government's statements that they are emphasizing minimization of collateral damage, and we are continuing to monitor it."

Iraqi forces apparently have the help of Iranian Gen. Ghasem Soleimani, the commander of the elite Revolutionary Guard's Quds Force, who arrived two days ago, the Iranian semi-official Fars news agency reported.

The powerful general has emerged as the chief tactician in Iraq's fight against the Sunni militants, working on the front lines alongside

dozens of advisers from his country's Revolutionary Guard to direct Shiite militiamen and government forces in the smallest details of battle.

Fars also reported drones were flying over Tikrit, without identifying whether they were Iranian or Iraqi.

The military commander of Salahuddin region, Gen. Abdul-Wahab al-Saadi, told state TV fighting was taking place outside Tikrit mainly on its eastern side.

"Until this moment we have not entered the city," al-Saadi said. "God willing, we will enter, but we need some time as planned. ... God willing, victory will be achieved and Salahuddin will be turned into a grave for all terrorist groups." □



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Seoul: North Korea test fires 2 short-range missiles

HYUNG-JIN KIM
Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) —

North Korea on Monday fired two short-range ballistic missiles into the sea and warned of "merciless strikes" against its enemies as allies Seoul and Washington launched annual military drills. Pyongyang claims are preparation for a northward invasion.

North Korea regularly conducts such test firings of missiles, rockets and artillery, and they are often timed to express the country's dissatisfaction with actions by Washington and Seoul. Monday was the start of military drills that will run until the end of April.

Early Monday morning, two missiles launched from North Korea's west coast flew about 500 kilometers (300 miles) before landing in waters off the east coast, according to South Korea's Defense Ministry. Spokesman Kim Min-seok



A man watches a TV news program reporting that North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles, at Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, Monday, March 2, 2015. North Korea on Monday fired two short-range ballistic missiles into the sea and warned of "merciless strikes" against its enemies as allies Seoul and Washington launched annual military drills. Pyongyang claims are preparation for a northward invasion. The letters read "North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles."

(AP Photo/Lee Jin-man)

called the launches an "armed protest" against the South Korea-U.S. drills and a challenge to peace

on the Korean Peninsula. U.S. State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf told reporters she could

not independently confirm the launches, but said that firing such ballistic missiles would threaten regional

peace and security and violate multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions. She urged North Korea to take steps to lower tensions and not raise them "as this may have done."

The annual U.S.-South Korean military drills inevitably lead to angry North Korean rhetoric, although the allies say they are purely defensive. The North's rhetoric is meant to show its people that a tough leadership is confronting what its propaganda portrays as outside hostility, but analysts also believe the drills infuriate because they cost Pyongyang precious resources by forcing the country to respond with its own drills and launches.

"The only means to cope with the aggression and war by the U.S. imperialists and their followers is neither dialogue nor peace. They should be dealt with only by merciless strikes," an unidentified spokesman for the North Korean military's general staff said in a statement carried by state media.

He said the U.S.-South Korean drills are aimed at conquering the North's capital, Pyongyang, and removing its leadership.

During the 2013 drills, tension rose amid North Korean rhetoric that included vows of nuclear strikes on Washington and Seoul.

The rival Koreas earlier this year floated the possibility of holding what would be the third summit between their leaders since the countries were divided 70 years ago. But they have been at odds in recent weeks over terms, and prospects seem dim. □

New Saudi king meets Turkey leader amid thaw in relations

A. AL-SHIHRI
Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) —

In a meeting that marks a thaw in diplomatic ties, King Salman and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Monday discussed regional issues such as the ongoing war in Syria, Iran nuclear talks and turmoil in Yemen.

Relations between the two countries had become tense under the late Saudi King Abdullah, largely due to Erdogan's stinging criticism of Egypt's military-led ouster of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi in 2013.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates branded Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood group a terrorist organization, while Turkey and its ally Qatar welcomed Brotherhood figures seeking refuge.

Senior Saudi royals and top Turkish ministers, including the deputy prime minister, foreign minister and minister of economy took part in the talks in Riyadh, the Saudi Press Agency reported without disclosing further details. The king has held similar talks aimed at sharing his policy views with a number of world lead-

ers since ascending to the throne in January.

A day earlier, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi met in Riyadh with the newly enthroned Saudi king. In an interview with Al-Arabiya news channel prior to his visit, el-Sissi — who was Egypt's military chief during Morsi's ouster and led the crackdown against his Islamist supporters — said Turkey "needed to halt its interference in Egypt." Despite Saudi Arabia's support for el-Sissi, the kingdom and Turkey agree on a number of regional issues, particularly Syria. Both are

supporters of Sunni rebels in Syria seeking to topple Iranian-backed President Bashar Assad. Saudi Arabia is part of the U.S.-led coalition striking Islamic State group fighters in Iraq and Syria, but the kingdom has said the aim of its airstrikes is also to empower Syrian rebels against Assad.

Erdogan was last in Saudi Arabia in January for Abdullah's funeral. Before meeting with Salman, he performed the Islamic pilgrimage in Mecca and prayed at the first mosque built by the Prophet Muhammad in Medina. □

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bottles
of wine**Venezuela sets deadline to US to slash embassy staff**

U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Lee McClenney, center, arrives for a private meeting with Venezuela's Foreign Relations Minister Delcy Rodriguez in Caracas, Venezuela, Monday, March 2, 2015. President Nicolas Maduro announced over the weekend that the government had detained American spies and would be taking steps to shrink the U.S. Embassy staff.

(AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

H. DREIER
J. GOODMAN
Associated Press
CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)
— Venezuela has given the U.S. two weeks to slash its diplomatic mission here to less than 20 percent of its current size as tensions between the two nations rise.

Foreign Minister Delcy Rodriguez made the announcement Monday after a rare meeting with the top American diplomat in Caracas. She said the U.S. mission must be cut to 17 diplomats to strike a bal-

ance with the 17 Venezuelan diplomats that serve in the U.S. It is up to the U.S. to decide which of an estimated 100 diplomats stationed here it wishes to send home.

Over the weekend, President Nicolas Maduro said his socialist government had detained several Americans spies, and would be taking a series of retaliatory measures, including imposing a visa requirement for American tourists, banning the entry of conservative Republicans like former Vice Presi-

dent Dick Cheney and Sen. Marco Rubio, and imposing rules to curtail the movement of the U.S. diplomats he accuses of plotting with the opposition to oust him.

State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf, who spoke before the meeting in Caracas ended, said the U.S. was "clearly concerned" about Venezuela's new policies toward diplomats and tourists.

"There has been a lot of anti-American rhetoric coming out of the Venezuelan government, with a

lot of baseless allegations," she said.

Harf declined to say how many diplomats work in the U.S. Embassy, an imposing compound that sits above Caracas in a secluded, tree-lined neighborhood.

The U.S. has not exchanged ambassadors with the South American country since 2010. Lee McClenney represents the mission as chargé d'affaires. Reflecting the distant state of relations between the two nations, McClenney's name was twice misspelled as "Clenny" in government statements before Monday's meeting, which Rodriguez described as cordial.

Maduro regularly rails against the U.S. for meddling in his country's affairs. He accuses the U.S. of staging an "endless coup" which he blames for Venezuela's chronic shortages and worsening economy. He has taken to leading weekly chants of "Gringo, go home," and last month accused the U.S. of plotting with opposition leaders to bomb the presiden-

tial palace.

The U.S. did endorse a brief coup led by opposition leaders that toppled Maduro's mentor, the late President Hugo Chavez, for two days in 2002.

Michael Shifter, president of Inter-American Dialogue, said he doesn't expect the U.S. to respond with a dramatic change in its own policies toward Venezuela.

"It's clear Maduro is flailing about, not knowing what to do, so he's falling back on the tried and true by blaming the U.S.," said Shifter, adding that the government has so far failed to present convincing evidence of U.S. involvement in destabilizing acts. "The problem is it's no longer credible." The new restrictions underscore Venezuela's role as the most stridently anti-American country in the hemisphere. Cuba, Venezuela's closest ally, is in talks with the U.S. to expand staffing in the two countries' diplomatic missions and let diplomats travel outside their respective capitals without having to ask permission. □

Bolivia seizes 27 tons of coca leaves

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP)—Bolivian authorities say they've seized 27 metric tons of shredded coca leaves that were to have been shipped to Lebanon for processing into cocaine. It was labeled as yerba mate, a caffeine-rich tea that is especially popular in Argentina and Uruguay.

That's according to deputy social defense minister Felipe Caceres. He told reporters that Monday's seizure was a first.

Caceres said the shredded coca was found in a warehouse in the eastern city of Santa Cruz and was to have been shipped to Lebanon through Chile.

He said it could have yielded 100 kilograms (220 pounds) of cocaine, which could fetch at least \$4 million wholesale in Europe and the Middle East.

Caceres said two people were arrested at the Santa Cruz warehouse.

He did not disclose their names. □

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Cuban socialite Natalia Revuelta Clews dies at 89

A. RODRIGUEZ
Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Natalia Revuelta Clews, the Cuban socialite who emptied her bank account and sold her diamond jewelry to support Fidel Castro when he was a little-known insurgent, has died. She was 89. Revuelta, who first caught the eye of the young revolutionary in 1952, opened her home for Castro to plot a barracks assault the following year that is considered the start of the revolution. They later had an affair that produced a daughter, Alina, who as an

Revuelta was an only child whose parents divorced when she was a toddler. Her mother remarried when she was 10, to an executive at the U.S.-owned Havana Electric Company. She attended the American-run Ruston Academy in Havana and Mt. St. Joseph's Academy, a Catholic girls' school in Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania. She also studied business at Marjorie Webster College in Washington before returning to Cuba at 19, working first for the U.S. Embassy and later for Standard Oil.

Revuelta was 22 when she

1998 biography, "Havana Dreams." She was also unfulfilled by motherhood. Revuelta began attending meetings of the Orthodox Party, which opposed corruption in the government. At the time, Castro was married to Mirta Diaz-Balart, whom he met while studying law at the University of Havana. He first laid eyes on Revuelta at a protest marking the anniversary of the 1871 slaying of independence-minded medical students by Spanish soldiers.

Castro dispatched a mutual friend who introduced

lives to (Castro) and his cause," Tad Szulc wrote in "Fidel: A Critical Portrait." She handed over all of her savings of 6,000 pesos — then worth the same amount in dollars — to support his movement, and later pawned her sapphires, emeralds and diamond jewelry for his cause. She sewed fatigues for his rebels to wear, and delivered Castro's uprising manifesto to top Havana newspaper editors.

The 1953 barracks assault failed, with most of the rebels killed and the rest captured. Revuelta wrote to Castro frequently when he was in prison, sending him scores of books and an envelope of sand to remind him of the beach.

Castro's prison love letters to Revuelta are one of the few glimpses into his closely guarded emotional side: "I am on fire. Write to me, for I cannot be without your letters," he wrote in 1954.

Castro and Diaz-Balart divorced, in part because one of his letters to Revuelta was mistakenly delivered to his wife.

Castro was freed in 1955, and he and Revuelta became lovers for what she said was the first time. She became pregnant, though she didn't tell Castro until after he had fled to Mexico later that year.

Castro then asked Revuelta to come to Mexico and marry him, but she refused, convinced he would not survive. Alina was born in March 1956, six months before Castro returned to Cuba and took to the Sierra Maestra mountains.

Castro did not recognize his daughter, and Revuelta's estranged husband gave her his last name. Castro eventually told Alina at 12 she could become a Castro, but by then she didn't want to, according to her memoir.

After Castro's forces toppled Batista, Revuelta quietly began preparing for a role as Cuba's first lady — but it was not meant to be, as Castro kept his distance. She and her husband divorced in 1959, and he took their daughter Nina to the United States. □



Children carry framed images of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara in a caravan tribute marking the 56th anniversary of the original street party that greeted a triumphant Castro and his rebel army, in Regla, Cuba. Natalia Revuelta Clews, the Cuban socialite who emptied her bank account and sold her diamond jewelry to support Fidel Castro when he was a little-known insurgent, has died. She was 89. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

adult became a harsh critic of the communist leader from exile in Florida.

Revuelta's caretaker, Carmen Garcia, told The Associated Press that Revuelta died Friday and had been cremated in a private family ceremony. Revuelta's longtime friend Natalia Bolivar, a renowned anthropologist, said Revuelta had been ill after a fall. Revuelta's family could not be reached for comment. Revuelta was "one of the most exquisitely beautiful women in Cuba and a woman with an abnormally sensuous appetite for revolution and adventure," Georgie Anne Geyer wrote in her biography of Castro, "Guerrilla Prince."

Born Dec. 6, 1925, "Naty"

married heart surgeon Orlando Fernandez, nearly 20 years her senior. She gave birth to a daughter, Nina, and became a fixture of Havana's social scene. She belonged to the Havana Country Club, played in weekly bridge and tennis tournaments and often lunched at a yacht club. "Blonde, green-eyed, buxom and always in exuberant spirits, Naty was the kind of woman who stopped eyes and tongues when she entered a room," Geyer wrote in "Guerrilla Prince."

But Revuelta was restless. Her husband worked long hours and she was tired of floating from one cocktail party to another, according to Wendy Gimble's

the pair. A few days later, the same friend approached Revuelta, wanting to know if Castro could drop by her house. "Of course," she replied. "After five o'clock, I'm always home."

Castro was briefly jailed soon after for leading an underground movement against strongman Fulgencio Batista, and he didn't turn up at Revuelta's for months. But after he did, her home became a key planning area for the attack on the Moncada army barracks in eastern Cuba.

Revuelta was "one of an extraordinary contingent of beautiful and/or highly intelligent women who, in effect, dedicated their

CARIBBEAN News Briefs

4 from US drown off the Dominican Republic coast

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP) — Authorities in the Dominican Republic say four people from the U.S. drowned in an incident along the country's eastern coastline. Civil Defense Director Amado Avila says the three men and a woman apparently got caught in strong currents off Playa Macao near the resort community of Punta Cana. The three men were identified as Kush, Jay and Ken Patel. The woman was identified as Kajal Patel. They ranged in age from 27 to 30. Their hometowns were not provided but officials said all four lived in the United States. They were among 12 members of an extended family visiting Playa Macao on Sunday when the incident occurred. One of the men was rescued alive from the sea but died on the way to a hospital. □

Report: 4 resort employees killed in Jamaica crash

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP) — Jamaican police say four men have died in a two-vehicle crash in a northern section of the Caribbean country. The Jamaica Constabulary Force did not immediately release the identities of the four dead men, who were traveling together in a Toyota Yaris. But Radio Jamaica reports that three were from the Dominican Republic and one was from Spain. Local media says the men worked for a Spanish company's beach resort on the Caribbean island. Police say the four were traveling in mostly rural Trelawny parish on Sunday when their sedan collided with a truck traveling in the opposite direction. The men driving in the Toyota were pronounced dead at a local hospital. The driver of the truck has been reported in stable condition. □

LOCAL Aruba TODAY

Israel Vibrations Brings Roots Reggae Live To Aruba!



EAGLE BEACH – World-renowned musical ensemble Israel Vibrations gave an electrifying open air performance on beautiful Eagle Beach on Sunday, attended by thousands of Reggae lovers from Aruba and abroad! Even a little bit of rain did not bother anyone enjoying the sweet sounds of music mixed with the cool afternoon breeze.

Israel Vibrations, originating from Kingston Jamaica, known to play Roots Reg-

gae music, spoiled the crowd with a two our free concert playing all their famous songs. The yearly event, called 'Flip Flop,' sponsored by the local beer brewery and their beer 'Balashi Chill' brought in local artists Roger Peterson & the Roosters, many DJ's like DJ Splash, DJ Yeimy, Andy Safado, Alex Sargo, DYNA, Karixon and Nutzbeatz. This was an all day event that lasted till midnight and will not be forgotten.□



Excellent Food, Real Good Prices and Fantastic Service: Exciting New Things are Happening at The Blue Lobster Restaurant



PALM BEACH - A well recognized Chef has joined the professional staff of The Blue Lobster Restaurant, since January 2015, after having setup and work for over 7 years at one of the best seafood oceanfront restaurants of the island, our new chef wanted to climb even higher and joined a young operation where he could repeat or even surpass his previous success.

Only one month has passed since he came on board and already the good comments are surpassing our already high numbers, especially at TripAdvisor.

New menus are also now available! Of course Lobster is our main concept, but now The Blue Lobster has become a one-stop

restaurant, featuring meat, seafood, Creole, and a good number of fantastic Italian dishes that been added (an outrageous Zuppa di Mare, Frutti di mare Alfredo, aragosta a la fradiavolo, penne a la putanesca and more). Also popular is the catch of the day specials at very low and reasonable prices. Whole red snapper oven broiled in white wine sauce or deep fried, to name a few.

The Blue Lobster will add the services of a new Restaurant Manager coming from a well-recognized European hotel/restaurant chain where great experience was achieved.

Another exciting addition is our new chef, with an outstanding record, having worked at De Luc Restaurant at Champ Elyse, Paris, just steps away from the Eiffel Tower, as well as at 2 renowned restaurants in London. These new additions will bring The Blue Lobster to the next level, says owner Mr. Castano.

Repeat visitors are increasing constantly, which is due to the efforts and had



work of the staff at The Blue Lobster.

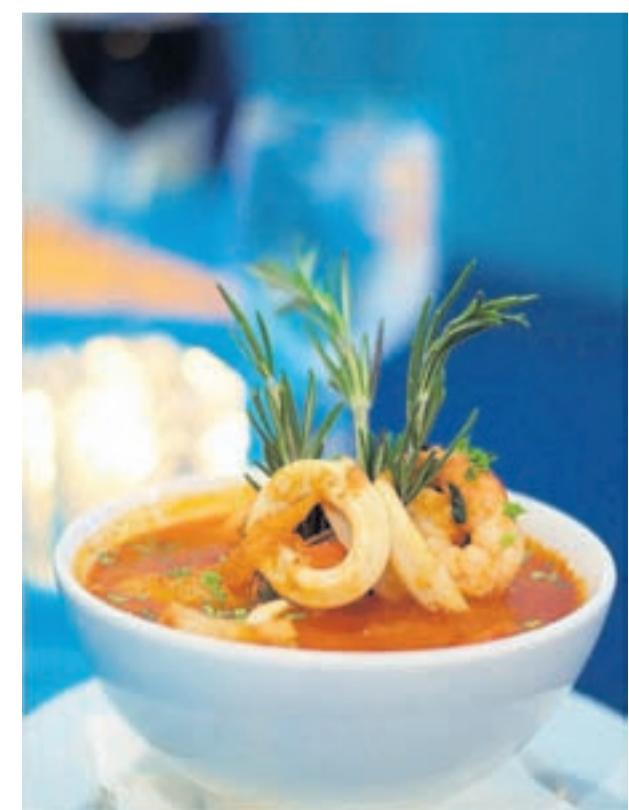
The high culinary skills of its international staff has made hundreds of fans already and the care and professional attention provided by the highly educated service staff are now known around the world. This has been confirmed by our esteemed clients who are recommending their friends and families to visit The Blue Lobster when coming to Aruba from countries as far away as Russia, Brazil, Portugal, Germany, Switzerland and England - while 70% of our patrons come directly from the USA. And a great percentages are locals and from other counties of South America.

On Wednesday and Friday a three course dinner is offered for just \$42.00 per person. Around 11 lobster dishes are available in this promo, including 7oz. lobster tails, lobster thermidor, and even garlic shrimps and pastas, and there are plenty of options for land lovers too!

A visit to The Blue Lobster restaurant without trying the already famous Blue Lobster Cocktail or the Blue Mojito will not be a complete visit - these are must try cocktails made by our experienced bartender, and of course all renowned brands and liquors are readily available. A carefully chosen wine list which will satisfy the palates of the most extreme

wine connoisseurs is another good reason to visit The Blue Lobster.

The Blue Lobster restaurant is a must visit while in Aruba. Enjoy the real Aruban flavors, Authentic Local Food is available at noon for lunch, Fresh Catch of the Day, Sopi Pisca (local style delicious fish soup), Keri-Keri (shark meat in a delicious local seasoning) Frikendel (Homemade Aruban style fish cakes) or try any of the local stews just like grandma made them from centuries ago. Good food does not need to be expensive and one can rest assure there will be: Good food, good service and good prices. See you at The Blue Lobster Restaurant.□



ALHYDRAN, a highly recommended medical moisture-regulating gel-cream in burn clinics worldwide, now locally available.

Tourists and locals love Aruba Aloe's skin care and sun care products, but what most people don't know is that Aruba Aloe also produces a highly concentrated moisture-regulating gel-cream called *Alhydran*, which is used for the aftercare treatment of burn scars, surgical wounds, redness, itching, rashes after laser therapy or radiotherapy, and other scar tissue. This very effective cream has become one of the new standards in scar treatment in university hospitals and burn clinics worldwide. Sold in over 22 countries, this unique Aruban export product is now locally available in all Aruba Aloe stores and on www.arubaaloe.com.

A success story

Wim Arns, a middle-aged Dutch man, got severely burned on his hands and face when cigar ashes drifted down into a bucket of paraffin oil he was holding, causing a spontaneous explosion. Wim: "After being treated in the Burn Centre in Rotterdam, the doctors referred me to a skin therapist in my hometown to continue the aftercare of the burn scars. My skin felt really tight and itchy, and I wanted a cream to help with this. That's when the therapist recommended *Alhydran*. Already within an hour of applying the cream, I felt my skin had more space to breathe and the itching stopped. My face has healed completely, the skin has total flexibility again, and the same goes for my hands. Therapy certainly contributed to this, but I attribute the flexibility of the skin and eradication of the itching to the use of *Alhydran*."



Alhydran through the eyes of a professional

Rina Rijkenberg is a certified skin therapist in Oosterbeek, the Netherlands. As a specialist, she has different skin products to choose from, but *Alhydran* is her #1 solution. Rina: "A lot of complaints are that the skin feels dry, itchy, red, sensitive, and painful, which are symptoms frequently associated with burn victims, lymph edema patients, and people who have undergone radiation therapy or have general scar tissue, acne, or excessive hair. All this can be caused by a deregulation in the moisture levels of the skin. The secret to *Alhydran* is that it regulates the moisture levels of the skin continuously in an unprecedented way. A very high dosage of pure Aloe Vera gel delivers the hydration, and pure Vitamin C, Vitamin E, and Jojoba oil prolong the activity. Patients can actually see and feel their skin healing."



Before



After

Points of Sale

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• Aruba Aloe Factory & Museum Store (Hato)	• Aruba Aloe Divi Links (Divi Aruba Hotel)
• Aruba Aloe Renaissance	• Aruba Aloe Tamarijn Tamarijn Aruba Hotel)
• Aruba Aloe La Cabana	• Aruba Aloe Occidental (Occidental Hotel)
• Aruba Aloe Paseo Herencia (Shopping mall)	• Aruba Aloe Marriott Ocean Club
• Aruba Aloe Alhambra	• Aruba Aloe Riu Palace Antillas
• Aruba Aloe Arawak (Palm beach)	• Aruba Aloe Main Street
• Aruba Aloe Cruise Terminal (APA Cruise Terminal)	• Aruba Aloe at The Village (In front of Radisson Resort)



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tour, also a variety of watersports such as wave runners, parasailing, tubing and much more. Our desks are located at Casa del Mar (pool deck), Playa Linda resort next to the juice bar, Holiday Inn Desk and at the Concierge & Pelican Pier desk located between Holiday Inn hotel & Playa Linda Resort. Pelican Nest Restaurant of-

fers an impressive selection of fresh seafood (caught daily by our own fleet), International dishes and a relaxing atmosphere. Open daily for dinner reservations call 297-586-2259 from 11 am. Our Captain's Morgan Pier Bar offers a daily happy hour from 4 till 6 pm. Last but not least our Pizzeria del Mar that offers a variety of pizzas.□



SPORTS**Aruba TODAY**

Texas Rangers pitcher Yu Darvish participates in a drill during spring training baseball practice Sunday, Feb. 22, 2015, in Surprise, Ariz. Associated Press

Rangers Yu Darvish: "I didn't quit on team."

By TOM WITHERS

AP Sports Writer

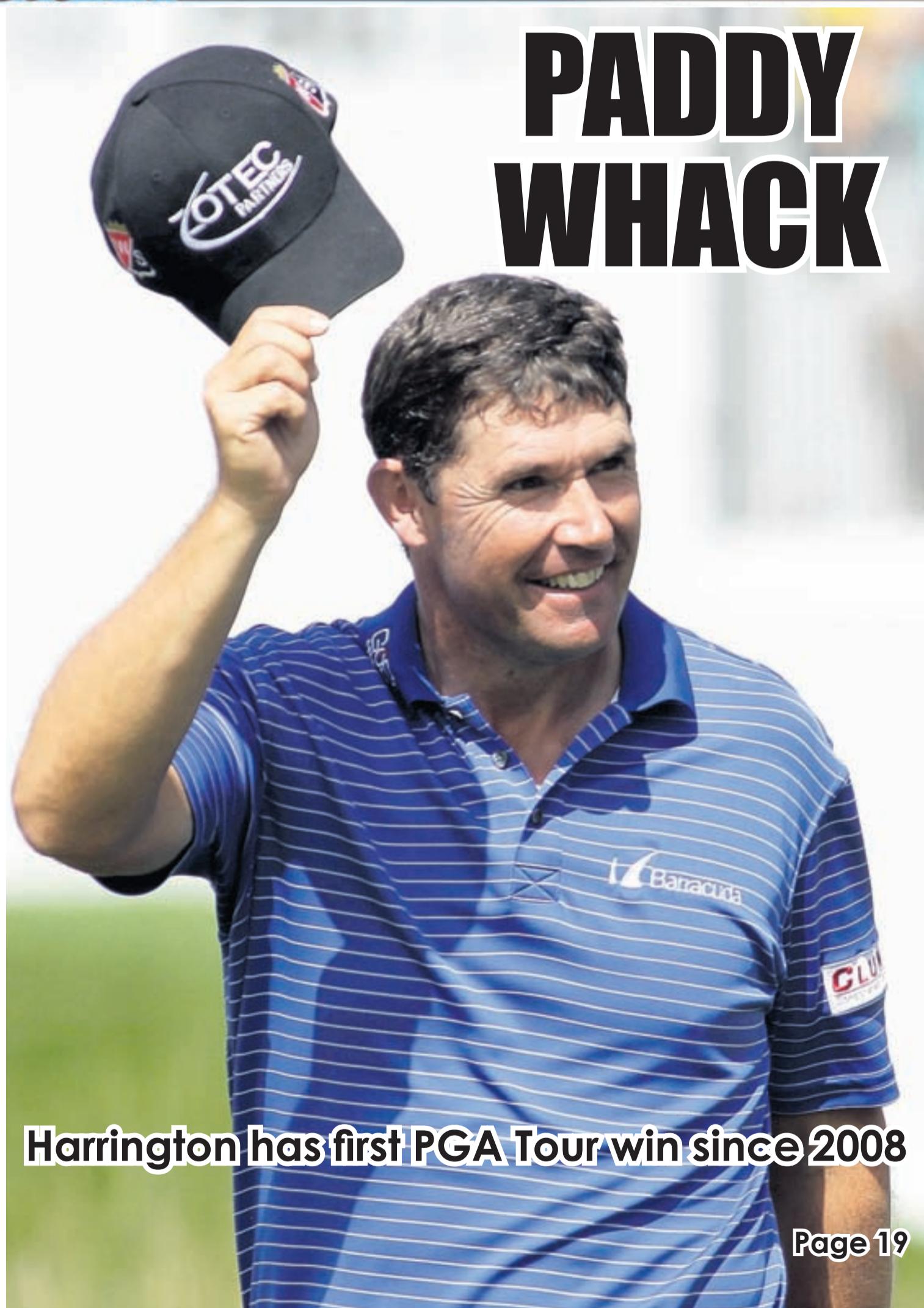
SURPRISE, Ariz. (AP) - Yu Darvish saved his best stuff for after his inning on the mound. The Texas Rangers ace, who was shut down last August with elbow inflammation, threw 14 pitches without any discomfort on Sunday during an intra-squad game - his most extensive work since the injury ended his 2014 season.

Darvish struck out two of three batters he faced as curious Rangers fans, the usual large Japanese media contingent that follows his every move and a touring college team from Japan watched through the fence on a back practice field behind Surprise Stadium. Afterward, the three-time All-Star described his outing as "great," saying he was pleased with his performance, which included him hitting 94 mph on the radar gun. But while he dazzled onlookers, Darvish delivered a surprise following the workout by speaking to beat writers almost exclusively in English for the first time since joining the Rangers in 2012.

Continued on Next Page



PADDY WHACK



Harrington has first PGA Tour win since 2008

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Padraig Harrington holds the trophy after winning the Honda Classic golf tournament Monday, March 2, 2015, in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. Associated Press

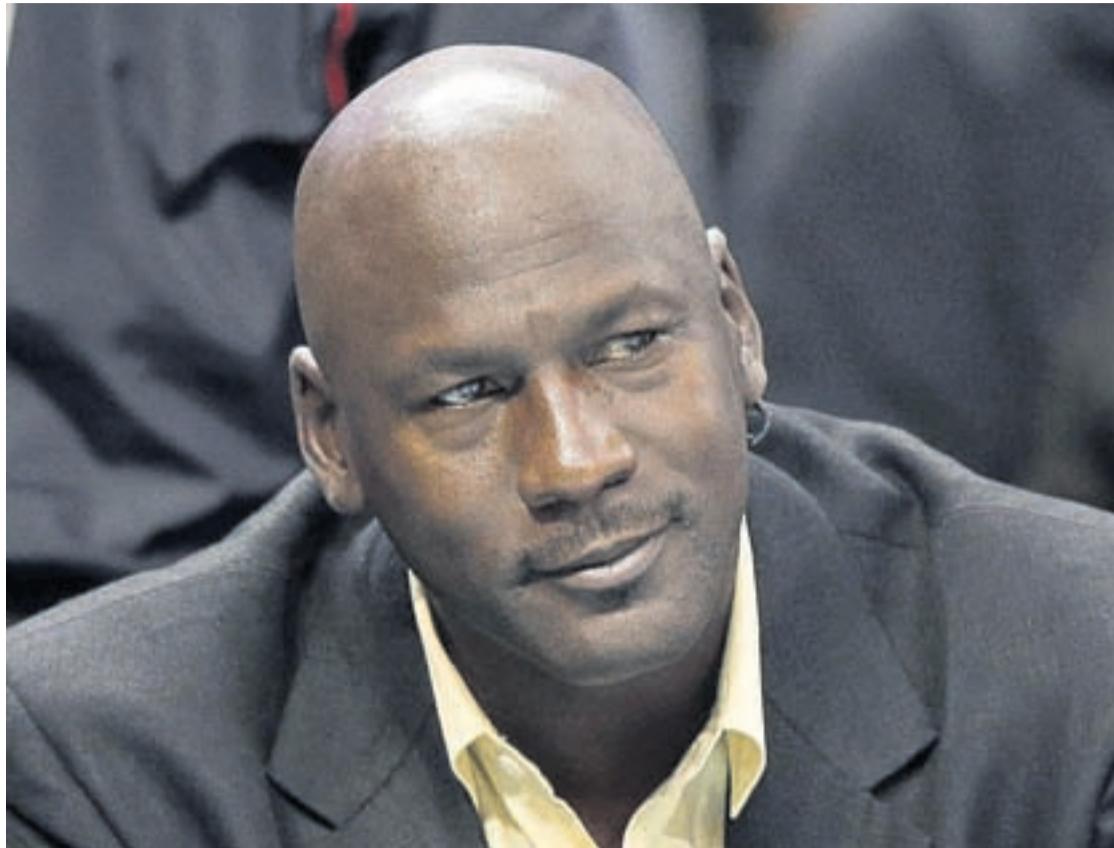
Jordan, other NBA owners join Forbes' billionaire list

NEW YORK (AP) - Michael Jordan and some other NBA owners have reached new heights, landing on Forbes world list of billionaires.

Forbes released its list on Monday and noted that Jordan's net worth is estimated at \$1 billion, thanks to his well-timed investment in the Charlotte Hornets.

Steve Ballmer, who recently purchased the Los Angeles Clippers, tops the list of sports-related billionaires with a net worth of \$21.5 billion. The net worth of NBA franchise values increased this past year after Ballmer bought the Clippers for \$2 billion.

Houston Rockets owner Leslie Alexander's net worth is listed at \$1.6 billion and Chicago Bulls' owner Jerry Reinsdorf is worth \$1.3 billion, according to the magazine.



This is an April 16, 2014, file photo showing Charlotte Bobcats owner Michael Jordan watching during the first half of an NBA basketball game between the Bobcats and the Chicago Bulls in Charlotte, N.C.

Jordan and Reinsdorf are newcomers to the list

while Alexander returns for the first time since

2007.
The 52-year-old Jordan,

Yu Darvish

Continued from Previous Page

Standing in front of his locker, Darvish first shooed away Japanese reporters before addressing his injury and some of the criticism that followed.

After making his last start on Aug. 9 Darvish was accused in some circles of quitting on the Rangers, an allegation he shut down with a choice English curse word.

"I didn't quit on the team. I love this ballclub. I've never done that in my life. That's not true," he said. Darvish didn't pitch over the final seven weeks last season due to what the team described as "mild elbow inflammation." Darvish had initially said he could keep pitching if the Rangers were in the playoff race, leading some to speculate about the actual severity of his injury.

Darvish, though, explained doctors advised him that if he kept pitching he would be risking



further damage to his elbow ligament. He said he did not receive any injections in the elbow.

Clearly, something was lost in translation, prompting Darvish to say that the next step in his growth as a player is to "learn English."

"I know that when people come to Japan and they never speak Japanese, we feel bad," he said. "If they speak Japanese, we feel good, so I have to be like that. If I can speak more English, it's easier to communicate."

Darvish has been asked by manager Jeff Banister to take on more of a

leadership role this season, and the 28-year-old understands that to do that he has to overcome any language barrier with his teammates. He's been working hard on his second language, getting a hand from pitcher Colby Lewis, who played in Japan.

Darvish, too, is fine tuning his vast repertoire of pitches. His strikeouts were vintage Darvish, fooling infielder Rougned Odor and Michael Choice with nasty off-speed deliveries. Darvish, who has gone 39-25 with a 3.27 ERA in three seasons since signing a six-year, \$56 million contract,

acknowledged there have been times when he could have been mentally tougher.

"I can be more aggressive," he said.

Darvish said he feels more comfortable physically and mentally than at any time in his career. He's at peace, in a good place and recently revealed that he and girlfriend

a Hall of Fame player who won six NBA championships with the Bulls, reached billionaire status last June, according to the magazine. This is his first year on Forbes' annual list which typically is released in March.

Jordan acquired the majority stake in the Hornets in 2010 for \$175 million. Forbes last June listed Jordan's equity as owner of the Hornets is \$416 million and his net worth outside of the team to be \$600 million.

Among the other notables of sports-related billionaires is Seahawks owner Paul Allen, worth \$17.5 billion.

Some other NFL owners to make the list include Stephen Ross (Dolphins, \$6.5 billion) Stanley Kroenke (Rams, \$6.3 billion), Robert Kraft (Patriots, \$4.3 billion) and Jerry Jones, (Cowboys, \$4.2 billion). □

Seiko Yamamoto are expecting their first child together.

Speaking in English during the upbeat and friendly interview was a major step for Darvish.

"I'm happy," he said. "This spring if I change my mind, then I can pitch better. You understand?" His smile made sense in any language. □

Tanaka pleased with first batting practice

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — New York Yankees ace Masahiro Tanaka was pleased after throwing his first batting practice session.

The Japanese right-hander threw 25 pitches Monday. "As for the first time, I think it went well," Tanaka said through an interpreter.

Tanaka missed 2 1/2 months last season with a partially torn ulnar collateral ligament in his right elbow.

"I tried not to go too hard today," Tanaka said. "The reason is, it's natural once you get on the mound and once you're facing batters you want to go hard.

That's what I was thinking on the mound."

Tanaka said there have been no issues with the elbow.

"I understand that everybody's worried about the elbow and I understand too that I have to be cautious about it as well, but so far it's been good," Tanaka said.

Tanaka threw five or six split-finger fastballs.

"I'm pretty satisfied with how the ball was moving," he said.

Tanaka will likely throw batting practice again or take part in a simulated game later this week. □

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Harrington wins the Honda Classic in a playoff

DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

PALM BEACH GARDENS,

Fla. (AP)—Whether he was piling up majors or playing so poorly that he lost his PGA Tour card, Padraig Harrington never wavered from one goal in golf. Just get him anywhere near the lead with nine holes to play, and he would happily take his chances.

His caddie, Ronan Flood, reminded him of that Monday morning in the Honda Classic when Harrington was four shots behind at the turn.

"He said, 'Look, would you have taken this on Thursday?' And I said, 'Yes, that's what you want,'" Harrington said. "You want to be in contention with nine holes to go, because anything can happen coming down the stretch. And it did."

Not even Harrington could have written the script to his playoff victory at rain-soaked PGA National.

He ran off four straight birdies on the back nine to take the lead. He gave it back with a 5-iron into the water for double bogey on the par-3 17th. He made a 15-foot birdie putt to force a playoff. And given a shot at redemption, he hit 5-iron to 3 feet on the 17th to win on the second playoff hole when 21-year-old rookie Daniel Berger hit into the water and made double bogey.

Ten years after winning the Honda Classic for his first PGA Tour victory, Harrington won it again. It was his first PGA Tour victory since he won the 2008 PGA Championship at Oakland Hills for back-to-back majors.

Harrington lost his card last year and needed a sponsor's exemption to get in

the Honda Classic. Now he's eligible for the Masters, The Players Championship and at least two World Golf Championships. He had fallen to No. 297 in the world. The 20th win of his career moved him to No. 82.

None of that mattered to him as he sat next to the trophy, Irish eyes smiling bright as ever. "It's not about what it means to my career or what it means going forward," he said. "You don't win that often. When you win, make sure you enjoy it."

Harrington's birdie on the 18th was the most meaningful putt he has holed since one from the same distance for par on the 18th at Oakland Hills. It gave him an even-par 70 and the second chance he needed in a playoff over Berger, the hometown rookie who finished birdie-birdie for a 6-under 64. They finished at 6-under 274, the survivors of a day in which five players had a share of the lead at some point, and four of them found water at the worst time.

"It's one of those golf courses where you get yourself in contention, it is a little bit uncomfortable," Harrington said. "But that's the way it is."

That's how it was for Ian Poulter.

He was staked to a three-shot lead going into the final round, which began Sunday afternoon because of rain delays. Poulter hit five shots into the water. One of



Padraig Harrington poses for photographers after winning the Honda Classic golf tournament on the second playoff hole against Daniel Berger, Monday, March 2, 2015, in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

Associated Press

them erased a three-shot lead. Another erased a two-shot lead. And when he hit two into the water on the 14th hole for triple bogey, he was done. Poulter finished birdie-birdie for a 75 to miss the playoff by one shot.

"It's just bitterly disappointing to put myself in the position I have, to play as well as I've played ... and a couple of loose shots has cost me this tournament," Poulter said. "It's a shame to hand tournaments away. I've handed one away this week."

That's how it was for Patrick Reed.

He matched birdies with Harrington on the 14th hole and they were tied at 7 under when Reed hit his tee shot into the water and made double bogey. He bogeyed the next two holes, shot 73 and finished three shots behind.

"I had three holes that kind of bit me," he said.

And ultimately, that's how

it was for Berger. He had a 15-foot birdie putt to win on the 18th in a playoff and narrowly missed. Then, he watched Harrington hit 5-iron to within 3 feet on the 17th on the next playoff hole.

"He's a great player, and that shot on 17 was kind of a dagger in the heart," Berger said.

Paul Casey, who lost in a playoff at Riviera last week, was tied for the lead until a bogey on the 14th hole. He never caught up, missing a 20-foot birdie putt on the 18th that would have got him into another playoff. He closed with a 68.

Casey tied for third with Russell Knox (68) and moved to No. 45, getting him into the World Golf Championship at Doral.

Phil Mickelson was four shots behind when the final round resumed Monday morning. He missed a 10-foot par putt at No. 9, didn't make a birdie and shot 73 to tie for 17th.

Harrington was five shots behind when he pulled his tee shot at No. 11, so far left it was on a muddled patch of grass that had been trampled by the gallery. He hit 4-iron at the right flag, over the water, to 15 feet for a birdie and a three-shot swing when Poulter hit into the water for double bogey.

That was the start of four straight birdies. That one shot might explain one of the more complex minds in golf. In the lead with a good lie, he sees trouble. From behind and in trouble, he only sees opportunity.

"I'm not going to win the tournament unless I take it on," he said.

With a one-shot lead on the 17th hole in regulation, he tried not to make a mistake and hit in the water. In a playoff on the 17th, he fired at the flag.

"Believe it or not," he said with a smile, "when I get in contention I can still hit the shots." □

Fenninger takes Vonn's super-G lead with 2 wins in Bulgaria

DEREK GATOPoulos

Associated Press

BANSKO, Bulgaria (AP) —

With less than three weeks of competition left, Anna Fenninger is on a roll. The Olympic champion from Austria overtook Lindsey Vonn in the super-G standings and closed in on Tina Maze at the top of the overall World Cup standings with back-to-back victories in Bulgaria. The 25-year-old Fenninger won Monday's super-G in 1 minute, 14.59 seconds, beating Maze by 0.16 seconds. Vonn was third, 0.28 seconds behind.

The victories narrowed Maze's overall lead to 44 points, while also pushing Fenninger ahead of Vonn in the super-G discipline standings.

"I couldn't show my best skiing here because of the weather conditions but it's

been great," Fenninger said. "I've had a perfect two days."

Although she gained ground ahead of the World Cup finish in Meribel, France, on March 22, Fenninger noted that Maze is set to compete in two slalom races that she's likely to skip.

"So you never know what will happen," the Austrian said. "I have confidence ... and I'll try to keep going."

Skiers raced under clear skies in the Pirin Mountains on Monday after fog forced two days of cancellations and upset some competitors on Sunday. Despite the start-stop races, noisy fans filled the stands throughout the weekend, joined by the country's president, Rosen Plevneliev, who handed out prizes Monday with a

broad grin.

Maze said she was happy to return to form after failing to finish in the three races prior to Bansko.

"I had three zeroes on my account," the Slovene said. "It isn't easy because Anna is skiing fast. ... So I think I can be happy with my weekend."

For Vonn, making the podium after returning to competition from prolonged injury was another good sign in her recovery. "I'm definitely very happy with my comeback season. It's difficult being away from the sport for almost two seasons," Vonn said. "I always believed I could make it back to the top. But I didn't know it would come so quickly." The women's World Cup resumes later this week in Garmisch Partenkirchen, Germany. □



Austria's Anna Fenninger, winner of an alpine ski World Cup women's super-G event, celebrates on the podium in Bansko, Bulgaria, Monday, March 2, 2015.

Associated Press

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NHL Capsules

Ovechkin scores twice as Capitals blank Maple Leafs 4-0

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Alex Ovechkin scored his 40th and 41st goals of the season and added an assist, and Braden Holtby made 32 saves as the Washington Capitals ended a three-game losing streak with a 4-0 victory over the Toronto Maple Leafs on Sunday. Ovechkin struck just 33 seconds into the game and added a second-period score as he surpassed the 40-goal mark for the seventh time.

Marcus Johansson and Joel Ward (empty net) added third-period goals for Washington, and Holtby picked up his seventh shutout and 30th win of the season.

James Reimer stopped 28 shots for Toronto, which has lost 16 straight road games.

PENGUINS 5, BLUE JACKETS 3

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Evgeni Malkin scored twice and added an assist as Pittsburgh's revived power play dominated the Columbus Blue Jackets.

David Perron, Steve Downie and Derrick Pouliot also scored for the Penguins, who have won four straight. Sidney Crosby picked up two assists and Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 22 shots as Pittsburgh sent the Blue Jackets to their sixth straight defeat.

Curtis McElhinney made 36 saves for the Blue Jackets. James Wisniewski, Ryan Johansen and Nick Foligno scored for the Blue Jackets.

PANTHERS 4, LIGHTNING 3

SUNRISE, Florida (AP) — Jaromir Jagr had a goal and an assist as the Florida Panthers beat the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Aaron Ekblad, Brad Boyes and Aleksander Barkov also scored for the Panthers. Al Montoya made 20



Washington Capitals left wing Alex Ovechkin (8), from Russia, celebrates his goal in the first period of an NHL hockey game against the Toronto Maple Leafs, Sunday, March 1, 2015, in Washington.

Associated Press

saves, and Jonathan Huberdeau had three assists. Jagr was acquired in a trade with New Jersey on Thursday for two draft picks. He gave Florida a 1-0 lead when he scored 10:24 into the game.

Tyler Johnson, Steven Stamkos and Anton Stralman scored for the Lightning.

JETS 5, KINGS 2

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP) — Andrew Ladd scored twice as the Winnipeg Jets boosted their playoff hopes in a win over the Los Angeles Kings.

The Jets also got goals from a pair of recent acquisitions, Drew Stafford and Tyler Myers, and held the defending Stanley Cup champions to 20 shots on goal in one of their more complete efforts of the season. Blake Wheeler added an empty-net goal. Jeff Carter scored twice for Los Angeles, and the Kings dropped their third consecutive game after an eight-game winning streak.

DUCKS 3, STARS 1

DALLAS (AP) — Clayton Stoner scored the go-ahead goal in the third period with his first of the season as Anaheim beat

Dallas.

Stoner, who hadn't scored in his first 54 games, put a slap shot from the left point between the legs of Dallas' Jhonas Enroth. The goal was unassisted.

The game was tied at 1 before Stoner's goal at 4:19 of the third. Ryan Getzlaf increased the lead to 3-1 on a breakaway at 14:09.

Corey Perry and Ryan Getzlaf each had a goal and an assist for Anaheim.

CANUCKS 6, BLUES 5

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Nick Bonino, Radim Vrbata and Chris Higgins scored in the shootout as Vancouver recovered from blowing a three-goal lead for a win over St. Louis.

Eddie Lack made 34 saves for Vancouver, while Shawn Matthias, Yannick Weber, Jannik Hansen, Henrik Sedin and Bonino each had goals in regulation.

Ryan Reaves, Alex Pietrangelo, Dmitrij Jaskin, Petteri Lindbohm and David Backes had goals for the Blues, who scored three times in the third period to force extra time. Vladimir Tarasenko had the lone shootout goal for St. Louis. In other NHL games it was

Vancouver 6, St. Louis 5, SO; Winnipeg 5, Los Angeles 2; Florida 4, Tampa Bay

3; Pittsburgh 5, Columbus 3; Washington 4, Toronto 0; and Anaheim 3, Dallas 1.



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WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

MON-THURS 4:00 | 6:00 | 8:20
FRI 4:00 | 6:00 | 8:20 | 10:40
SAT 3:50 | 6:00 | 8:20 | 10:40
SUN & HOL 3:50 | 6:00 | 8:20

MON-THURS 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30
FRI 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30 | 11:50
SAT 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30 | 11:50
SUN & HOL 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30

OLIVIA WILDE | EVAN PETERS

THE LAZARUS EFFECT

(PG-13)

MON-THURS 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35
FRI 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35 | 11:35
SAT SAT 3:35 | 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35 | 11:35
SUN & HOL 3:35 | 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35

COLIN FIRTH | TARON EGERTON

Kingsman: THE SECRET SERVICE

(R)

MON-FRI 3:50 | 6:35 | 9:20
SAT 3:50 | 6:35 | 9:20
SUN & HOL 3:50 | 6:35 | 9:20

DAKOTA JOHNSON | JAMIE DORNAN

FIFTY SHADES OF GREY

(R)

MON-THURS 4:05 | 6:45 | 9:25
FRI 4:05 | 6:45 | 9:25
SAT SAT 1:50 | 4:05 | 6:45 | 9:25
SUN & HOL 1:50 | 4:05 | 6:45 | 9:25

ANTONIO BANDERAS | TOM KENNY

THE SPONGEBOB MOVIE: SPONGE OUT OF WATER

3D VERSION

MON-THURS 4:20 | 6:30 | 8:35
FRI 4:20 | 6:30 | 8:35 | 10:45
SAT 2:10 | 4:20 | 6:30 | 8:35 | 10:45
SUN & HOL 2:10 | 4:20 | 6:30 | 8:35

2D VERSION
MON-FRI 5:00 | 7:05
SAT 2:55 | 5:00 | 7:05
SUN & HOL 2:55 | 5:00 | 7:05

CHANNING TATUM | MILA KUNIS

JUPITER ASCENDING

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

MON-THURS 9:10
FRI 9:10 | 12:00
SAT 9:10 | 12:00
SUN & HOL 9:10

KEVIN HART | JOSH GAD

the Wedding Ringer

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

MON-THURS 4:50 | 7:05 | 9:20
FRI 4:50 | 7:05 | 9:20 | 11:35
SAT 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:05 | 9:20 | 11:35
SUN & HOL 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:05 | 9:20

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NBA Capsules**Harden's 33 points leads Rockets over****The Associated Press**

HOUSTON (AP) — James Harden scored 33 points and LeBron James missed a pair of free throws with 4.2 seconds left in overtime, helping the Houston Rockets hold on for a 105-103 win over the Cleveland Cavaliers on Sunday.

James hit a 3-pointer with 43.5 seconds left to get Cleveland within one. Harden and James got tangled up on Houston's next possession, but no foul was called and the shot clock expired.

James drove into the lane and was fouled by Josh Smith, but missed both free throws to finish 3 for 11 at the line. Harden, who had his 26th 30-point game this season, added a free throw and Cleveland missed a 3 at the buzzer.

James finished with 37 points after resting during Friday night's loss at Indiana. He returned for a chippy contest that had multiple technicals and a flagrant foul by Harden on James.

The Cavaliers had a chance to win in regulation but James held the ball until right before the buzzer and his jump shot bounced off the rim. Kevin Love had 21 points for the Cavaliers, who played their second game without point guard Kyrie Irving, who has a left shoulder strain.



Houston Rockets' James Harden (13) shoots in front of Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James in the first half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, March 1, 2015, in Houston.

Associated Press

The loss ended Cleveland's 10-game winning streak against the Western Conference and prevented the Cavs from moving into first in the Central Division. Cleveland has won 18 of 22 but has dropped two straight.

WARRIORS 106, CELTICS 101

BOSTON (AP) — Stephen Curry scored 37 points,

making four straight free throws to clinch it in the final seconds as Golden State erased a 26-point deficit to beat Boston.

Golden State won for the seventh time in nine tries and snapped Boston's three-game winning streak. Klay Thompson scored 20 for the Warriors, Harrison Barnes had 17 and Dray-

mond Green scored 11 of his 14 points in the fourth quarter.

Isaiah Thomas scored 20 points off the bench for Boston. Jae Crowder had a career-high 17 rebounds to go with his nine points, but his 3-pointer with a chance to give Boston the lead with under a minute left rolled around the rim and out.

CLIPPERS 96, BULLS 86

CHICAGO (AP) — DeAndre Jordan had 26 rebounds and Chris Paul scored 28 points to lead Los Angeles past Chicago.

Los Angeles was behind 76-75 when Jamal Crawford made a 3-pointer with 8:02 left. The Clippers never trailed the rest of the way. After a scoreless first half, Crawford had 16 points in the final two quarters.

The Clippers extended their winning streak to five in a row in Chicago, the longest in franchise history. They haven't lost there since Dec. 17, 2008.

Bulls rookie reserve Nikola Mirotic scored a career-high 29 points. He accounted for all but one of his team's 17 points in the fourth quarter.

Chicago All-Star Jimmy Butler sprained his left elbow when he ran into Jordan's pick early in the third period and sat out the rest of the game.

THUNDER 108, LAKERS 101

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Serge Ibaka had 18 points and 14 rebounds, and D.J. Augustin added 18 points and nine rebounds as Oklahoma City beat the Lakers without Kevin Durant and Russell Westbrook.

Enes Kanter had 16 points and 15 rebounds as the Thunder's supporting cast snapped a two-game skid with no help from its superstar duo. Durant is out with a foot injury, and Westbrook underwent surgery on his right cheek Saturday in his native Los Angeles.

Yet the Thunder's role players, backups and newcomers never trailed against the 14th-place Lakers, whose three-game winning streak ended meekly.

Jeremy Lin had 20 points, eight assists and six rebounds for Los Angeles, which got at least eight points from eight players, but couldn't win its season-high fourth straight.

TRAIL BLAZERS 110, KINGS 99

SACRAMENTO, California (AP) — Damian Lillard scored nine of his 31 points in the fourth quarter and LaMarcus Aldridge had 26 points and 15 rebounds as Portland beat Sacramento for its third straight victory. Wes Matthews scored 17 points and Robin Lopez had 15 points and eight rebounds for Portland, which is 14-13 on the road. □



□This is a Jan. 4, 2015, file photo showing Detroit Lions' Ndamukong Suh smiling as he walks across the field during warm ups before an NFL football game against the Dallas Cowboys in Arlington, Texas.

Associated Press**By NOAH TRISTER****AP Sports Writer**

DETROIT (AP) - Ndamukong Suh can test the open market when free agency begins March 10 after the

Lions decided not to use the franchise tag on the star defensive tackle, according to a report on the team's website.

Monday is the deadline for

Lions' website reports team won't franchise Suh

teams to designate franchise or transition players. The Lions did not officially confirm the decision to let the deadline pass without franchising their 28-year-old All-Pro, but the report on the team's website said Detroit concluded that the franchise tag's price of around \$27 million for Suh proved too daunting.

Last month, general manager Martin Mayhew said he was optimistic about getting a deal done with Suh, but the franchise tag was probably the team's best source of leverage, and even that would have come at a prohibitive cost.

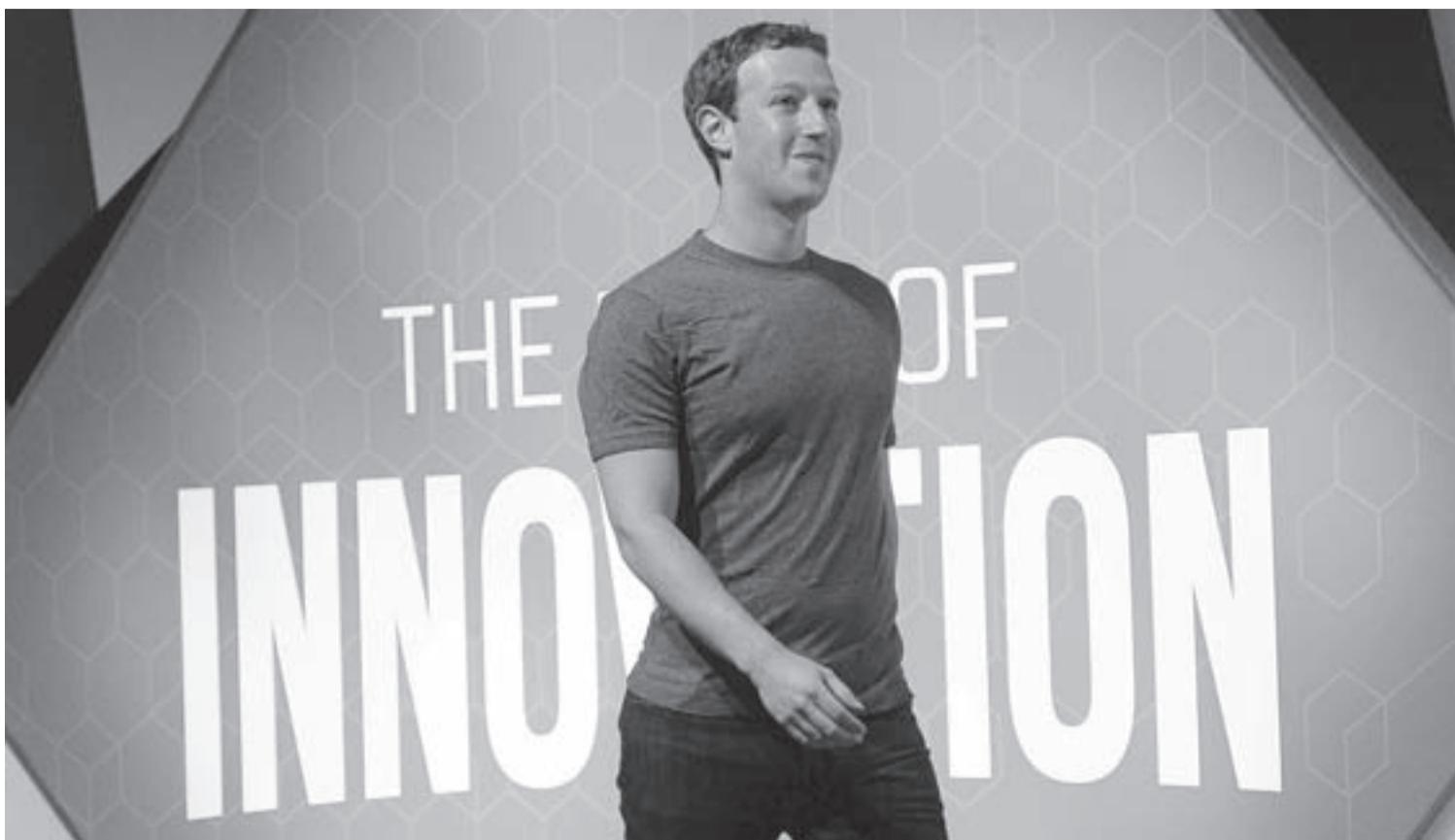
Suh has been a force in the middle of Detroit's defensive line ever since the Lions drafted him with the second overall pick in 2010. He has 36 sacks in five seasons, including 8 1/2 in 2014, when the Lions made the playoffs as a wild card while boasting one of the league's top defenses.

Suh has been hit with several fines in his career for his aggressive on-field actions, and he was nearly suspended for Detroit's playoff game at Dallas last season - a one-game ban for stepping on Green Bay quarterback Aaron Rodgers was overturned on ap-

peal. But that occasional drama has done little to detract from Suh's overall value to the Lions, who now face the prospect of having to bid against other teams for his services.

Suh, quarterback Matthew Stafford and wide receiver Calvin Johnson - all of whom came to the Lions via high draft picks - have helped Detroit reach the postseason twice in the last four years. The Lions were able to secure Stafford and Johnson on long-term deals beyond their rookie contracts, but so far they've been unable to sign Suh. □

Google, Facebook update contrasting plans to connect world



Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg arrives for a press conference at the Mobile World Congress, the world's largest mobile phone trade show in Barcelona, Spain, Monday, March 2, 2015.

Associated Press

JOSEPH WILSON
Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP)

— Sci-fi solutions or making friends one at a time? Google and Facebook are taking different routes to expanding Internet use and access among the unconnected in developing countries.

The two Internet giants gave updates on their efforts—and differing approaches—at the Mobile World Congress wireless show in Barcelona on Monday.

And while Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Google Vice President Sundar Pichai said they would like to collaborate more, they both appear happy to continue on their own way.

Zuckerberg said that in the past year, Internet.org, Facebook's fledgling effort to create new users in countries with little or low Internet use, has launched its application with basic free services in six countries.

Zuckerberg said the initial feedback from telecom partners in those countries was positive, calling the app an "onramp" for paid services.

"Last year when we talked, I basically said we

wanted to go in this direction," Zuckerberg said. "It was my request to the industry to find partners who would work on this with us. Since then we have worked on this program and we have launched in six countries—four in Africa and Colombia and just a couple of weeks ago in India.

"Even if they have never used Internet in their life, they have basic services they can use—communication, health, education and jobs—and that basically serves as an onramp so people can learn why they would want to pay for data. And we are finding that is growing paid subscribers and overall subscribers of the Internet."

The app is customized for each country and telecom operator so as to lure in new users while not hurting the telecoms' already existing base of customers with free versions of services they already pay for. That is the reason why Internet.org does not include the WhatsApp messaging services, bought by Facebook last year.

Mario Zanotti, Senior Vice President of Operations at Millicom, said that Internet.org was working well

for his company's business in Paraguay.

"Internet is an abstract concept. We need to bring it down to earth," he said.

Earlier, Pichai announced Google's plans to start testing the use of solar-powered drone aircraft as "floating cell towers" that could bring coverage to remote areas or even disaster zones.

He also said that Google's "Project Loon" to use high-altitude air balloons to provide coverage for rural areas had advanced to the point that they are expected to be ready in two years time.

"The model is really beginning to work, so we have started large-scale testing," he said. "You can imagine a constellation of balloons and planes together, which we can stitch together to create a mesh of floating cell towers. That's what we trying to do.

"We will be flying these planes out in the coming few months. That's the next big step for us."

While both executives said they would be willing to work more together—Internet.org, for example, includes Google Search—they also made sure to un-

derscore their differences.

"No one company can bring connectability at scale for 4 billion people, and we are happy to work with them to provide our services on Internet.org, so that's exciting for me," Pichai said. "Having said that, it's complementary, but what we are trying to do is different. We are trying to provide the actual backbone, the physical connectability at scale across the globe, so it is different."

Facebook is also experimenting with drones and satellites, but Zuckerberg said that the focus on high-tech fixes was "sexy" though not as important as helping local telecom operators grow their businesses. □

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This photo shows the company logo on a Hewlett-Packard keyboard in Santa Clara, Calif. Hewlett-Packard is buying wireless networking company Aruba Networks for about \$2.7 billion, the company announced Monday, March 2, 2015.

(AP Photo/Paul Sakuma)

HP's Deal: Tech giant buys Aruba Networks for \$2.7B

BRANDON BAILEY

AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

Hewlett-Packard is buying wireless networking company Aruba Networks for about \$2.7 billion, in what amounts to HP's first major acquisition since its disastrous purchase of a British software company in 2011. Aruba, based in Sunnyvale, California, makes Wi-Fi networking systems for shopping malls, corporate campuses, hotels and universities. Its business has grown as more people are using mobile devices at work, school and elsewhere. Aruba may help HP capitalize on that trend, which has cut into sales of traditional HP products such as desktop computers.

The deal also could help HP compete with tech rivals such as Cisco Systems and gain new access to Asian markets, particularly in China. Cisco currently sells about half of all commercial wireless networking gear worldwide, according to UBS analyst Amitabh Passi. He estimates HP and Aruba combined will account for 20 percent of global sales for such systems. HP is seeking to expand its tech portfolio for business customers at a time when it is preparing to split into two companies — one focused on selling computer systems and software to businesses, and the other selling personal computers and printers. That's part of HP CEO Meg Whit-

man's plan for confronting a recent decline in sales. Buying Aruba gives HP "a faster growing, higher margin business that fills a portfolio need without 'betting the ranch,'" Bernstein analyst Toni Sacconaghi wrote in a note Monday. Palo Alto, California-based HP is one of the industry's giants, with \$111 billion in sales last year, but it has struggled to adapt to recent tech trends and shifting customer preferences. Whitman has focused on cutting costs and reorganizing since she took the CEO job in 2011. She recently signaled she was ready to resume making strategic acquisitions, after buying a pair of small software companies last year.

HP made a number of multi-billion-dollar acquisitions under two CEOs who preceded Whitman, and some of those deals proved costly. HP paid about \$11 billion for British software maker Autonomy in 2011. A year later, it was forced to write off \$8.8 billion of that purchase as a loss, while blaming accounting irregularities that it said had inflated the value of Autonomy's business.

With the Aruba deal, HP is paying \$24.67 in cash for each Aruba share. That is slightly below Aruba's closing price of \$24.81 on Friday, but marks a 37 percent premium to the roughly \$18 that Aruba shares were trading for before talks with HP were reported last week. □

Nasdaq 5,000:

Index passes milestone number

BY MATTHEW CRAFT

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Nasdaq composite closed above 5,000 for the first time since its dot-com era peak nearly 15 years ago after merger news and an encouraging economic report helped push U.S. stocks broadly higher on Monday.

The major indexes rose from the start, with the Nasdaq passing the 5,000-milestone shortly before noon. The tech heavy index then dropped, before rising toward the close to end at 5,008.10, just 40 points from its March 2000 record.

Investors cheered a report from the govern-

Jones industrial average rose 155.93 points, or 0.9 percent, to 18,288.63. The Nasdaq rose 44.57 points, or 0.9 percent.

The broad gains on the first trading day of March came after the best monthly advance for stocks in more than three years. The S&P 500 climbed 5.5 percent in February, its biggest gain since October 2011.

In deal news, NXP Semiconductors said Sunday that it's planning to acquire Freescale Semiconductor in an \$11.8 billion deal. The merger would create the largest supplier of microchips for cars.

NXP's stock jumped \$14.67, or 17 percent, to \$99.56.

flation, spending rose. And analysts are expecting the strong income gains will lead to more spending the rest of the year.

Household income after taxes shot up 0.9 percent in January, the biggest gain in two years.

Investors also were watching developments overseas.

The People's Bank of China cut interest rates for the second time in three months on Saturday, trimming the rate for one-year commercial loans to 5.35 percent.

It was the latest measure aimed at propping up growth in the world's second-largest economy. The



In this Oct. 25, 2001 file photo, Microsoft chairman Bill Gates stands in New York's Times Square to promote the new Windows XP operating system. When the Nasdaq reached its record in 2000, Microsoft was its biggest company in the index, with Cisco, Intel, Oracle and Sun Microsystems completing the top five.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

ment showing household incomes rose in January, though they spent less than a month earlier. Consumer discretionary stocks rose 1.2 percent on the news, the most of the 10 industry sectors of the Standard and Poor's 500 index.

"Today, it's about the consumer," said David Joy, chief market strategist at Ameriprise Financial. "Consumers appear to be feeling a little bit better."

The S&P 500 closed up 12.89 points, or 0.6 percent, to 2,117.39. The Dow

Freescale rose \$4.25, or 12 percent, to \$40.36.

Boards of both companies have already approved the deal. Regulators still need to sign off on it.

In other deal news, Cardinal Health rose \$1.53, or 1.7 percent, to \$89.52 after offering to buy a unit of Johnson & Johnson that makes heart devices for approximately \$1.94 billion.

In the U.S. government report, the dip in consumer spending in January was the second monthly drop in a row. But adjusted for in-

government has recently cut business taxes and boosted pay for government workers.

Asian stock markets closed higher, but European indexes were mixed.

Other stocks making big moves included Sotheby, which sank after the auction house posted a big drop in quarterly earnings. Higher expenses weighed on the company's profits, which came in below analysts' estimates. Sotheby sank 61 cents, or 1.4 percent, to \$43.34. □

The Human Stain



NICHOLAS KRISTOF

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SINJIL, West Bank - The Israeli elections scheduled for March 17 should constitute a triumph, a celebration of democracy and a proud reminder that the nation in which Arab citizens have the most meaningful vote is, yes, Israel.

Yet Israeli settlements here on the West Bank mar the elections, and the future of the country itself. The 350,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank - not even counting those in Arab East Jerusalem - impede any Middle East peace and stain Israel's image.

But let's be clear: The reason to oppose settlements is not just that they are bad for Israel and America but also that this nibbling of Arab land is just plain wrong. It's a land grab. The result is a "brutal occupation force," in the words of the late Avraham Shalom, a former chief of the Israeli internal security force, Shin Bet.

Most Israeli settlers are not violent. But plenty are - even stoning U.S. consular officials early this year - and they mostly get away with it because settlements are an arm of an expansive Israeli policy. The larger problem is not violent settlers but the occupation.

"We planted 5,000 trees last year," Mahmood Ahmed, a Palestinian farmer near Sinjil, told me. "Settlers cut them all down with shears or uprooted them." Israel has enormous security challenges, but it's hard to see the threat posed by 69-year-old Abed al-Majeed, who has sent all 12 of his children to university. He told me that he used to have 300 sheep grazing on family land in Qusra but that nearby settlers often attack him when he is on his own land; he rolled up his pant leg to show a scar where, he said, a settler shot him in 2013. Now he is down to 100 sheep.

"I can't graze my sheep on my own land," he said. "If I go there, settlers will beat me."

Sarit Michaeli of B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights group, accompanied me here and said that the allegations are fully credible. Sometimes Palestinians exaggerate numbers, she said, but the larger pattern is undeniable: "the expulsion of Palestinians from wide areas of their agricultural land in the West Bank." Elsewhere, I saw graffiti that said

"Death to Arabs" in Hebrew, heard Palestinians say that their olive trees had been poisoned or their tires slashed, and talked to an Arab family whose house was firebombed in the middle of the night, leaving the children traumatized.

The violence, of course, cuts both ways, and some Israeli settlers have been murdered by Palestinians. I just as easily could have talked to settler children traumatized by Palestinian violence. But that's the point: As long as Israel maintains these settlements, illegal in the eyes of most of the world, both sides will suffer.

To its credit, Israel sometimes lets democratic institutions work for Palestinians. In the southern West Bank, I met farmers who, with the help of a watchdog group, Rabbis for Human Rights, used Israeli courts to regain some land after being blocked by settlers. But they pointed wistfully at an olive grove that they are not allowed to enter because it is next to an outpost of a Jewish settlement. They haven't been able to set foot in the orchard for years, but I, as an outsider, was able to walk right into it. A settler confronted me, declined to be interviewed and disappeared again - but the Palestinians who planted the trees cannot harvest their own olives.

A unit of Israeli soldiers soon showed up to make sure there was no trouble. They were respectful, but, if they were really there to administer the law, they would dismantle the settlement outpost, which is illegal under Israeli as well as international law. Kerem Navot, an Israeli civil society organization, has documented "the wholesale takeover of agricultural lands" by Israeli settlers. It notes that this takeover is backed by the Israeli government "despite the blatant illegality of much of the activity, even in terms of Israeli law."

There are, of course, far worse human rights abuses in the Middle East; indeed, Israeli journalists, lawyers, historians and aid groups are often exquisitely fair to Palestinians. Yet the occupation is particularly offensive to me because it is conducted by the U.S. ally, underwritten with our tax dollars, supported by tax-deductible contributions to settlement groups and carried out by U.S. bulldozers and weaponry, and presided over by a prime minister who is scheduled to speak to Congress next week. At a time when Saudi Arabia is flogging dissidents, Egypt is sentencing them to death and Syria is bombing them, Israel should stand as a model. Unfortunately, it squanders political capital and antagonizes even its friends with its naked land grab in the West Bank. That's something that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu might discuss in his address to Congress.

Contact Kristof at Facebook.com/Kristof, Twitter.com/NickKristof or by mail at The New York Times, 620 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10018. □

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The GOP's Assertive God Squad



FRANK BRUNI

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Another presidential campaign is taking shape, and potential Republican candidates are beginning to speak with extra care - and sometimes with censorious hellfire - about certain social issues. As ever, they're bowing to a bloc of voters described as Christian conservatives.

But these voters are a minority of Christians. They're not such representative conservatives.

They have a disproportionate sway over the Republican Party. And because of that, they have an outsize influence on the national debate.

That's an inescapable takeaway from new data compiled by the Public Religion Research Institute, a nonpartisan group that interviewed more than 50,000 Americans last year.

To put together what it is calling the American Values Atlas, the institute divided survey respondents into more than a dozen faith-related categories, some of which factored racial identity into the equation as well. White evangelical Protestants and black Protestants are separate groups, as are white Catholics and Hispanic Catholics.

The institute looked at three issues: gay marriage, abortion and immigration.

It gave me a sneak peek at the results, being released in full on Wednesday, and also did some special analyses.

Among religious groups with large populations, white evangelical Protestants, who represent 18 percent of all Americans but 36 percent of self-identified Republicans, according to the survey, stood out as the most conservative. If you looked at the responses of all Republicans minus this evangelical subset, you saw a remarkably different party.

Among all Republicans, 35 percent favored the legalization of gay marriage, while 58 percent opposed it. But subtract the white evangelicals and the spread changes: 45 to 47. The party becomes almost evenly divided, in bold contrast to the decidedly negative stance that most Republican congressional leaders take.

Just 39 percent of all Republicans said that abortion should be legal in all or most cases, while 58 percent said that it shouldn't. Subtract the white evangelicals and again there's another nearly even split: 48 to 49 percent.

So the party's anti-choice ardor makes sense chiefly in terms of evangelicals. In fact Republican voters who aren't evangelical are probably even more socially liberal than those even-split numbers suggest, because the institute's survey counted as Republican or Democrat only those respondents who readily identified themselves that way. It didn't press others on whether they typically voted for one party, so the share of voters it categorized as independent was unusually large: 40 percent. In other words, its Republicans were the most committed Republicans.

"If you added in independents who lean Republican, you would expect to see the support for same-sex marriage and the support for abortion rise, precisely because they tend to be less ideologically oriented," Robert Jones, the head of the institute, told me.

And you'd see that white evangelical Protestants "tend to be outliers today on issues like same-sex marriage," he said. He added that in the 1980s, when Jerry Falwell and others referred to white evangelical Protestants as part of a "moral majority," the designation was overblown but perhaps arguable.

"Today, on these key, bellwether issues like same-sex marriage, it's no longer true," Jones said.

While 55 percent of all Americans, 52 percent of white Catholics and 42 percent of Hispanic Catholics said that abortion should be legal in all or most cases, just 32 percent of white evangelical Protestants responded that way.

In terms of allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally, 77 percent of Jews and at least 60 percent of all three Catholic subgroups - white Catholics, Hispanic Catholics and "other non-white Catholics" - said they favored it. So did more than 60 percent of white mainline Protestants.

But white evangelical Protestants?

Just 28 percent.

According to the survey, there are just seven American states - Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, West Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky - where more than 50 percent of voters oppose gay marriage.

All of them "have white evangelical Protestant populations of one-third or more," Jones told me. "There's basically a linear relationship between the number of white evangelical Protestants and opposition to same-sex marriage."

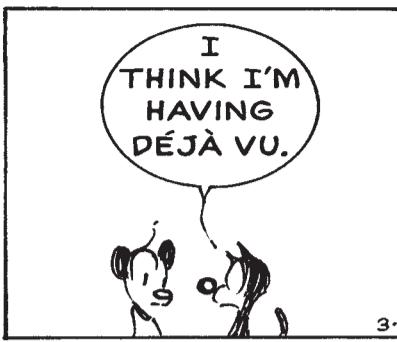
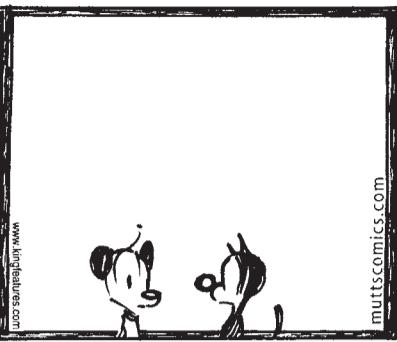
And when survey respondents were asked whether immigrants "strengthen the U.S." or "are a burden," the only religious group in which fewer people said "strengthen" than "burden" was white evangelical Protestants. The spread was 36 to 53 percent.

Among all Americans, the spread was the opposite, with 55 percent saying "strengthen" and 36 saying "burden."

The conversation on Capitol Hill doesn't exactly reflect that. Instead it suggests, accurately, that some voters' voices are louder than others', and are better heard. □

Mutts

CHARLES SCHULZ SAID, "A CARTOONIST IS SOMEONE WHO HAS TO DRAW THE SAME THING DAY AFTER DAY WITHOUT REPEATING HIMSELF."



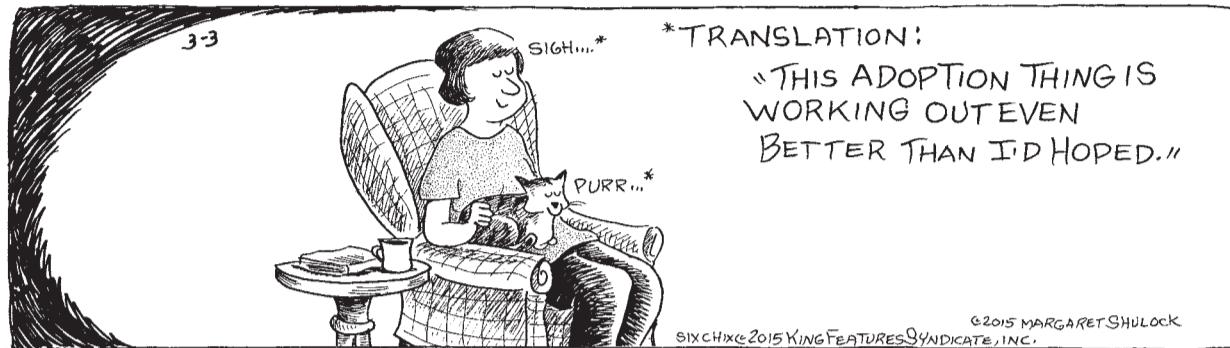
Conceptis Sudoku

		8	1	5
5	9		6	3
2			7	
4			7	5 9
	6		2	
2	3	4		7
			3	8
9		5	4	7
1		7	2	

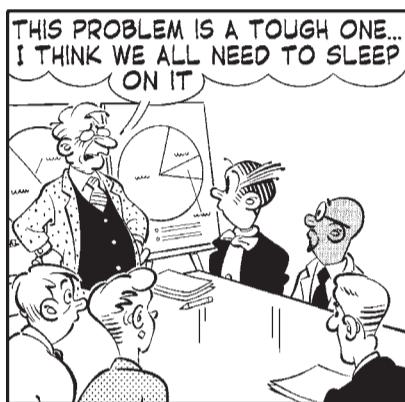
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6 Chix



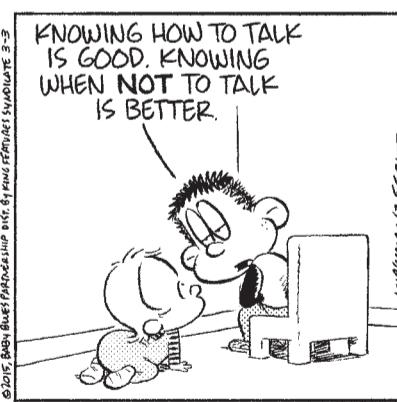
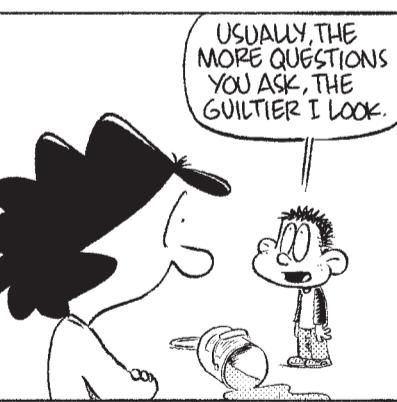
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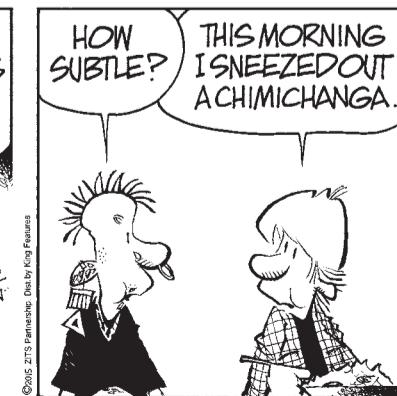
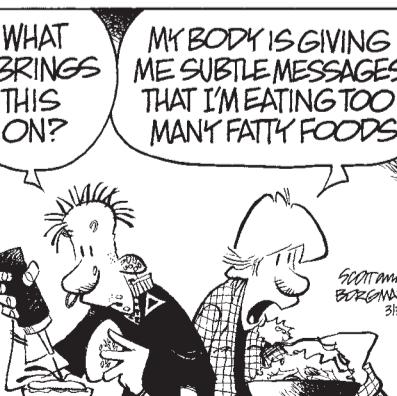
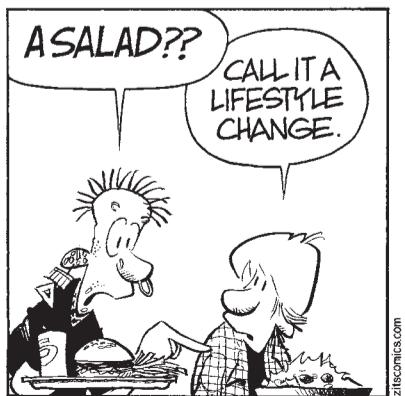
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Baby Blues



Zits



9	7	3	1	4	2	5	6	8
4	6	8	9	5	7	2	1	3
5	2	1	8	3	6	4	9	7
6	4	5	2	7	9	8	3	1
1	3	9	5	8	4	6	7	2
2	8	7	6	1	3	9	4	5
3	5	4	7	9	8	1	2	6
8	9	2	3	6	1	7	5	4
7	1	6	4	2	5	3	8	9

Yesterday's puzzle answer

ACROSS

1 Beer topper
 5 ___ around; bargain-hunts
 10 Filled with amazement
 14 Competent
 15 Cone-shaped dwelling
 16 Hired vehicle
 17 PC brand
 18 Pleas
 20 "...for an ___, a tooth for a..."
 21 Gondola movers
 22 Language heard in Wales
 23 Awkward and clumsy
 25 ___ Vegas, NV
 26 Puts on a play
 28 Door; entrance
 31 Carried
 32 Winning, so far
 34 TV's Koppel
 36 "___ better to have loved and lost than..."
 37 Anguish
 38 Stick around
 39 Sorority letter
 40 Sahara beast
 41 Smooth; charming
 42 Pep
 44 Fruit drinks
 45 ___ double take; look twice
 46 Dirtiness
 47 Garret
 50 Breakfast sausage piece
 51 Sra. or Mme.
 54 Stirring flour into bubbling gravy, e.g.
 57 Pass out cards
 58 Dissolve
 59 Big ___; VIP
 60 In the past
 61 ___ aside; saves
 62 Stay away from
 63 Worry; fret

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

3/3/15

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15					16			
17				18					19			
20			21						22			
				23	24				25			
26	27					28			29	30		
31				32	33				34	35		
36			37						38			
39			40						41			
42		43							44			
				45					46			
47	48	49							50		51	52
54				55	56				57			
58				59					60			
61				62					63			

Monday's Puzzle Solved

F	B	I	S	P	L	I	T	T	R	A	P	
O	A	T	S	A	L	O	N	E	H	O	L	
E	A	C	H	M	A	N	N	A	E	M	S	
S	H	A	R	P	N	E	S	S	E	A	T	
M	I	L	E	P	H	I						
S	T	R	I	F	E	T	H	U	S	O	N	
P	R	U	N	E	S	W	O	U	D	O	E	
R	A	G	E	N	I	N	G	N	L	O	I	
A	L	I	M	E	A	N	S	B	O	K	S	
T	A	N	G	I	B	L	E	M	O	U	S	
E	A	U	P	A	I	D						
G	O	N	W	I	N	T	E	L	C	T		
A	H	O	T	L	O	Y	A	S	O	I	L	
G	I	R	L	D	A	N	C	E	T	R	E	
S	O	M	E	S	H	E	E	T	D	D	E	

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3 Unproven charge
 4 Tillis or Blanc
 5 T-bones, e.g.
 6 Actor Winkler
 7 Makes a choice
 8 ___ capita; each
 9 Observe
 10 ___ to; confirm by signing
 11 Cry loudly
 12 Former spouses
 13 Plate
 19 Prize
 21 Was in debt
 24 Eras
 25 Take it easy
 26 ___-crazy; tired of confinement
 27 ___ max; fully
 28 Orange rind
 29 Something sent with an e-mail
 30 Depart
 32 Military force
 33 Go quickly
 35 Coloring agents
 37 Very excited
 38 Clubs or hearts
 40 ___-Pot; cooker
 41 Pout
 43 Royal decrees
 44 I've got bells that ___
 46 Penalized monetarily
 47 \$20-billion sources
 48 You, biblically
 49 Lean
 50 In ___ of; as a substitute for
 52 Marathon
 53 Murdered
 55 Female sheep
 56 Penguins' org.
 57 Uno, ___, tres...

3/3/15

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NASA spacecraft making first visit to dwarf planet Ceres

ALICIA CHANG
AP Science Writer

PASADENA, California (AP)

— A NASA spacecraft is about to reach the end of a nearly eight-year journey and make the first rendezvous with a dwarf planet. The Dawn craft will slip into orbit Friday around Ceres, a dwarf planet the size of Texas. Unlike robotic landings or other orbit captures, the arrival won't be a nail-biter. Still, Dawn had to travel some 3 billion miles (5 billion kilometers) to reach the largest object in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter.

"It's been a roller coaster ride. It's been extremely thrilling," project manager Robert Mase of the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory said Monday.

Ceres is the first of two dwarf planets to receive visitors this year. NASA's New Horizons spacecraft is barreling

toward Pluto where it will arrive in July.

Launched in 2007, Dawn made the first stop of its



This Feb. 19, 2015 image shows the dwarf planet Ceres provided by NASA, taken by the agency's Dawn spacecraft from a distance of nearly 29,000 miles (46,000 kilometers).

Associated Press

journey at the asteroid Vesta. It beamed back more than 30,000 images of the rocky world inside the asteroid belt before heading to its final destination.

As Dawn approached Ceres, it snapped pictures of the dwarf planet, revealing two mysterious bright spots inside a crater. Scientists will have to wait until the craft spirals closer to the surface in the coming months to get sharper images. It will get as close as 235 miles (400 kilometers) above Ceres' surface, or roughly the distance of the International Space Station above Earth. Last year, European researchers not connected with the mission detected water plumes spewing from two regions on Ceres. The source of the plumes remains unclear.

Deputy project scientist Carol Raymond said the shiny spots — possibly ex-

posed ice or salt — were a surprise and could be related to the plumes.

Dawn carries an instrument that should be able to detect the plumes if the surface is still active, Raymond said.

The \$473 million Dawn mission is the first to target two different celestial objects to better understand how the solar system evolved. It's powered by ion propulsion engines, which provide gentle yet constant acceleration. Vesta and Ceres reside in a zone between Mars and Jupiter that's littered with space rocks that never grew to be full-fledged planets.

Dawn entered orbit around Vesta in 2011 and spent a year photographing the lumpy surface and taking measurements of the second massive object in the asteroid belt from different altitudes. □

Myanmar captures rare white elephant in western jungles

YANGON, Myanmar (AP) —

Myanmar's forestry department has captured a rare white elephant in the jungles of the country's western Ayeyarwaddy region, an official said Sunday. The 7-year-old female was captured Friday, six weeks after it was initially spotted in a reserve in Pathein township, forestry official Tun Tun Oo said. It's the

ninth white elephant in captivity in the country. "We had to be careful," Tun Tun Oo said of the 1.9-meter-tall (6-foot-3) elephant. "It's wild. We didn't want the elephant or the forestry department officials to get hurt."

White elephants, which are actually albinos, have been revered for centuries in Myanmar, Thailand, Laos

and other Asian nations. Often pinkish in color, with fair eyelashes and toenails, the animals were normally kept and pampered by monarchs as symbols of royal power and prosperity — and many people still believe they bring good luck to the country. Myanmar already has eight white elephants in captivity, most from the Ayeyarwaddy region. □



In this Jan. 4, 2012, file photo, a white elephant is fed grass at a zoo in Naypyitaw, Myanmar. Myanmar says it has found a rare, white elephant in the jungles of the western Ayeyarwaddy region.

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In this Feb. 28, 2015 file photo, actress Ming-Na Wen attends the L.A. Premiere of "American Crime" in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Ming-Na Wen: 'S.H.I.E.L.D.' role makes me a cool mom

LAURI NEFF
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Ming-Na Wen says although she may play ace pilot and weapons expert Melinda May on "Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.," the television series about the Marvel Comics organization has become her arsenal for getting her children to think she's cool.

"They love the show," says Wen. She says that when her 9-year-old son, Cooper Dominic, saw the show debut at San Diego Comic Con in 2013, "He was like, 'Mom! I didn't know you could fly a plane. That is so cool!'" Wen says her son and her 14-year-old daughter, Michaela, are especially amazed because her kick-butt TV persona is so very different from the mom they know — a "girlie girl" who loves wearing sundresses. "I laugh all the time and I'm always smiling and mommy's the one that does the cooking and mommy's a klutz," she says.

The 51-year-old actress says her kids' rave reviews are the best she could ask for. "For me, my career could be over right then and there and I'd be happy." Wen says she's also excited about the remainder of the show's second season, which returns from its winter hiatus Tuesday at

9 p.m. (0200 GMT) on ABC. She says the series picks up right where it left off — focusing on S.H.I.E.L.D. agent Skye Johnson, who fans have learned is an Inhuman, Marvel's name for a fictional race of superhumans that appears in various Marvel comic books. She says the introduction of the Inhumans brings a new element to the show that "fans have been dying for, to have some characters with superpowers." □

Mark Cuban will play the president of the U.S. on SyFy's 'Sharknado 3'

NEW YORK (AP) — This summer's "Sharknado 3" will usher in the Cuban-Coulter administration. The SyFy network said Monday that Dallas Mavericks owner and "Shark Tank" star Mark Cuban will play the president of the United States in the third installment of the goofy "Sharknado" TV movie series, set to premiere in July. Conservative commentator and author Ann Coulter will be his vice president. The network previously said Bo Derek will have a cameo as star Tara Reid's mother, Jerry Springer will play a tourist and 'N Sync singer Chris



In this Jan. 31, 2015 file photo, Mark Cuban arrives at the 2015 DIRECTV Super Saturday Night in Glendale, Ariz.

Associated Press

Kirkpatrick will be a pool lifeguard. This year the toothy



In this April 17, 2012 file photo, Judge Judy Sheindlin attends the Vanity Fair Tribeca Film Festival party at the State Supreme Courthouse in New York.

Associated Press

longtime relationship with Judy," said Armando Nunez, president and CEO of CBS Global Distribution Group. "She is a true television icon, who entertains and inspires millions of fans each day."

Sheindlin was out of the country Monday. In a statement, she talked about being excited about producing new shows like "Hot Bench."

There's no word on whether the deal came together in the same manner as her last few contract extensions, as she outlined in her 2014 book, "What Would Judy Say? Be the Hero of Your Own Story."

She described going out to dinner with executives at her distribution group at a Beverly Hills, California, restaurant. At the beginning of the meal, she handed over a sealed envelope and told them not to open it until after the dinner. Inside was a note card with Sheindlin's suggested price and contract duration.

She told them it wasn't a negotiation — she wanted a "yes" or "no" answer.

"I didn't believe they would turn me down," Sheindlin wrote of the first such meeting at Grill on the Alley. "I didn't think they could afford to. But I was also prepared to walk away." She hasn't yet. One year, she said an executive handed back his own sealed envelope. She handed it right back, unopened. "If I open the envelope, it becomes a negotiation," she told them, "and this isn't a negotiation." "I'm a lucky woman to be able to set my own terms," the former New York City family court judge wrote. □

Veronica Roth working on new series; 1st book due in 2017

HILLEL ITALIE

AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Veronica Roth fans can start the countdown.

The "Divergent" author is set to write a new two-book series, HarperCollins Children's Books told The Associated Press on Monday. The books currently are untitled, with the first one expected in 2017 and the next in 2018.

Roth and her publisher offered few specifics, beyond saying the series is in "the vein of 'Star Wars'" and will tell of a boy's "unlikely alliance" with an enemy.

"Both desperate to escape their oppressive lives, they help each other attain what they most desire: for one, redemption, and the other, revenge," the publisher announced.

In a recent email to the AP, Roth wrote that "The idea started with a character. All the other elements — setting, world, even a substantial portion of the plot — came after." She added



In this Saturday, March 8, 2014, file photo, Veronica Roth, author of the book, "Divergent," poses for a portrait in Beverly Hills, Calif.

that while she had a "pretty detailed" outline for the new series, she was still in the early stages of writing. "That's why I'm being so vague," she explained.

"Divergent," a Dystopian trilogy Roth completed in

2013, has sold more than 30 million copies and along with Suzanne Collins' "The Hunger Games" and John Green's books helped perpetuate the strong growth of young adult novels. The first "Divergent" movie,

starring Shailene Woodley as teen heroine Tris Prior, came out a year ago and quickly earned more than \$100 million at the box office. Three more movies are planned, starting with the March 20 release of "Insurgent."

Associated Press

A Chicago resident, the 26-year-old Roth was still in college when she began "Divergent," writing it in her jammies while on winter break from Northwestern University. She is now one of the world's most popular authors.

"I think I'd have to be a robot not to occasionally worry about expectations!" she wrote to the AP. "But mostly I try to trust my instincts. It helps that I'm really in love with this project — that makes it a joy to work on."

"I've been really taking my time with it," she said of the new series. "I've written huge sections a certain way only to cut them and start again. I've stepped away for a while, to work on other things, and then come back when I have better perspective. I've been more patient with myself and with the story. I've expanded my collection of comfortable pants and snack foods. It's all working quite well so far." □

Julianne and Derek Hough to hit the road again this summer

ALICIA RANCILIO

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Sibling performers Derek and Julianne Hough have a busy summer ahead.

They're hitting the road for the second year in a row for their "Move Live on Tour," where they dance and sing before a live audience.

This time, they're upping the ante with added tour dates, bigger venues, all new choreography and bigger production values. Fan interaction is also an important element, both on stage and off. They participate in meet-and-greets before performances and often dance with audience members during the show.

"We want everybody to be up on their feet, moving in their seat, having a good time and to leave feeling inspired," said Julianne in a phone interview.

She says they haven't



Dancers Derek Hough and Julianne Hough participate in AOL's BUILD Speaker Series to discuss their upcoming "Move Live On Tour," at AOL Studios on Monday, March 2, 2015, in New York.

Associated Press

started rehearsing for "Move Live" yet because of their busy schedules. She's returning to judge on "Dancing with the Stars" and Derek will once again compete on the show. That means he'll juggle "Dancing" in Los Angeles with the "New York Spring Spectacular" at Radio City Music

Hall.

"Trust me, nobody was more surprised than I was," said Julianne of that revelation. "I was like, 'Wait. What? You're going to be flying back-and-forth and we're trying to create a tour? Are you nuts?'"

Tickets for "Move Live on Tour" go on sale Friday. □

Brokaw memoir about his battle with cancer coming in May



In this Sept. 22, 2014 file photo, Tom Brokaw speaks at the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry annual dinner in Hershey, Pa.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Tom Brokaw is sharing the news about his battle with cancer. The former NBC anchor has a memoir coming out May 12, Random House announced Monday. The book is called "A Lucky Life Interrupted," and will draw upon a journal that Brokaw began keeping in 2013 after learning he had multiple myeloma.

Brokaw, 75, said in a statement issued through Random House that he hoped his book would "help others dealing with this unwelcome condition."

Brokaw's previous books include the best-selling "The Greatest Generation" and "A Long Way From Home: Growing Up in the American Heartland in the Forties and Fifties." □

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